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SPIRITUALISM AMONG CIVILISED
AND SAVAGE RACES

AGENTS

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TARARAMANU, A SPIRIT OF THE SEA

As drawn by an artist of San Cristoval

(From *Journ. Royal Anth. Inst.*, Vol. xlv, 1915, p. 176.)

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SPIRITUALISM AMONG CIVILISED AND SAVAGE RACES

A STUDY IN ANTHROPOLOGY

BY

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PREFACE

No subject at the present moment commands, and rightly commands, greater attention than does that of the continuation of life after death. Many of those who, in the recent subversion of civilisation, have had to mourn the loss of loved ones have naturally turned to and have found a renewed solace in a venerable doctrine. Under the name of "Spiritualism," that doctrine has in recent years received the benediction of men who have achieved eminence in certain branches of scientific investigation, as well as of a host of imaginative writers. Great biologists and chemists, like Alfred Russel Wallace and Sir William Crookes; physicists and astronomers, such as Professor Oliver J. Lodge and Camille Flammarion; psychologists and writers of fiction, represented by men like Professor James H. Hyslop on the one hand and Sir A. Conan Doyle on the other, not only proclaim aloud their own conviction of a future life, but assure us that the doctrine rests upon a scientific basis, and that its truth can be proved by scientific methods.

The distinguished French astronomer holds that

it is established that the soul exists as a real entity, *independent of the body*; the co-exponent of the theory of Natural Selection declared that strict induction proves the existence of preterhuman intelligences, who, invisible and intangible, act on matter and influence our minds. Professor Oliver Lodge is convinced that the "new science" of man's survival of bodily death is proved by a large range of natural facts; according to the late Professor Hyslop, the existence and survival of the soul is "scientifically proved."

Thus a new import has been given to the old belief in the "immortality" of human life, a belief which is not only the most ancient, but also the most widely diffused of all religious concepts held by every race on earth in all stages of culture. Now, and in consequence of the conclusions of certain men of science, this old doctrine has entered upon a new phase; its truth or its falseness no longer rests with the decisions of theologians or the beliefs of medicine-men. The question, like many other questions, has ceased to be exclusively a religious one; it has become a scientific one. Its truth, therefore, must now be tested in the full light of recent research, and by all methods in the laboratory. It must stand or fall according to the evidence upon which its claims are based. But it is not a question which concerns the biologist and the psychologist, the astronomer or the physicist

alone; it is the especial concern of the anthropologist. It is, therefore, to the anthropological aspect of this most important subject that I invite the attention of the reader, and upon the evidence of which I ask him to form his own decision as to the claims and the truth of modern Spiritualism.

I am greatly indebted to Dr. W. H. R. Rivers, M.A., F.R.S., President of the Royal Anthropological Institute, for giving me permission, in the absence from this country of the Rev. C. E. Fox, to reproduce the frontispiece; to the Government of Madras and Mr. Edgar Thurston, C.I.E., for the photograph of the exorcist in Southern India; to the Rev. J. H. and Mrs. Holmes, of the London Missionary Society, for permission to reproduce the illustration showing nose-sticks worn by the Papuans; to the Baptist Missionary Society for the photograph by the Rev. W. L. Forfeitt of the witch doctor, Upper Congo; to the Council of the Royal Anthropological Institute and the Trustees of the British Museum for supplying blocks for Figs. 1 and 3, and Figs. 4 and 5 respectively.

EDWARD LAWRENCE.

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SPIRITUALISM AMONG CIVILISED AND SAVAGE RACES

CHAPTER I

MODERN SPIRITUALISM AND ITS EXPONENTS

What Spiritualism is.—The belief that beyond the present natural, visible, material universe there exists another world—real, but invisible; of a *super*-natural character; a sort of spiritual replica of the present, inhabited by the disembodied souls of men—is not only the most primitive concept of the human race, but the most far-reaching dogma, ethically and religiously, ever enunciated by man. It is a belief which meets us in every stage of culture, and forms the foundation upon which the varied creeds of savage and civilised races have been reared. Under its modern name, Spiritualism, or Spiritism, we are assured by its exponents that this spiritual world can be scientifically attested, and that there exists no longer any satisfactory reason to doubt its truth. We are told that the spirits prove their existence by manifesting their presence on occasions by means of raps and tilting

tables; by the transport of furniture as well as persons from place to place; by automatic writing and by playing upon musical instruments; as well as by unfastening complicated knots and imparting phosphorescence to various objects. As we shall see, such manifestations are not restricted to the séances held by modern Spiritualists, but form the common procedure among barbaric and civilised peoples alike.

Intelligent intercourse between these embodied or disembodied spirits is asserted to be possible by means of specially endowed persons called "mediums."

"Souls," "Ghosts," and "Spirits."—Before quoting the evidence which Spiritualists contend goes to prove the existence of a supernal world, it will be well for us to understand the meaning we intend by such familiar words as "soul," "ghost," and "spirit." I will use these words in their anthropological sense as defined in the excellent manual published by the Royal Anthropological Institute.¹ By *soul*, therefore, I mean the separable personality of the *living* man or other being—*i.e.*, before death. By *ghost* I mean the separable personality of man or other being after death. *Spirit*—the soul-like being which has never been associated either with a human or an animal body. These definitions will prevent any mis-

¹ "Notes and Queries on Anthropology," 4th ed., 1912.

conception that might arise respecting entities each of which has a distinct name and significance in primitive languages, and for which no exact equivalent exists in our own. Each entity may be either malignant or well-disposed towards those in the flesh; it may possess either a good or a bad character.

Modern Exponents of Spiritualism and their Claims.—Christian missionaries in China and other countries have frequently remarked that the superstitious beliefs and practices of the common people are shared by the educated and ruling classes, in spite of their culture and social position. Such facts have even been adduced as evidence to prove the truth of widely-spread superstitions and deep-seated faiths. Instances could be collated of representatives of an alien race and creed who have eventually shared the superstitious conceptions of other races; even missionaries themselves have ended by accepting as true the very beliefs which they had avowed to destroy!²

One need feel no surprise, therefore, that negroes who have received a European education point to the fact that many people in Europe are trying

² For instance, as regards Africa, the Rev. R. H. Nassau, an American Presbyterian *medical* missionary, who believes certain apparent cases of lunacy may really be "possessions by Satan"; and the Rev. J. L. Nevius, D.D., of the American Presbyterian Mission, Che-foo, a believer in demon possession in China.

by various methods to get back into intercourse with the spiritual world, and welcome this return on the part of their white brothers as a proof of those superstitions others wish to uproot.³

Spiritualists contend because certain men, who have achieved eminence in special branches of scientific thought, give their sanction to this "new religion," it follows, on these grounds alone, that the spiritualistic explanation of the world is a true one. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tells us that when he found Spiritualism endorsed by such men as Crookes, Wallace, and others, he himself could not afford to dismiss it. He declares that "it is possible to write down the names of fifty professors in great seats of learning who have examined and endorsed these facts, and the list would include many of the greatest intellects which the world has produced in our time."⁴ No more fallacious argument than this one could seriously be advanced. Are we, for example, to discard to-day those facts which geology has proved to the hilt—that man is the civilised descendant of an ape-like creature—simply on the ground that in

³ As, for instance, Dr. Edward Wilmot Blyden in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News*, reprinted in "African Life and Customs," 1912, pp. 71-73. Blyden was perhaps the most highly cultured negro, in English estimation, of all time.

⁴ Doyle, "The New Revelation," 1918, p. 22. "Report of Debate on Spiritualism between Sir A. Conan Doyle and Joseph McCabe," 1920, p. 7.

recent years a number of professors in great seats of learning have examined and endorsed the old tradition that the human race was especially created some six thousand years ago, and placed in a garden somewhere in Asia ? Whether or no any scientific data exist to prove the truth of modern Spiritualism, the belief in a land of ghosts is the most primitive, as it is the most universal, of man's religious conceptions, and the endorsement of that belief by certain men of science no more proves its accuracy than did the endorsement by learned professors of the ethnological accuracy of the Book of Genesis prove that the original condition of mankind was *not* one of primæval savagery.⁵ Science itself claims no infallibility, and acknowledges no Pope. What its ultimate verdict on any subject will be must depend, not upon the eminence of certain professors in great seats of learning, but upon the truth of the evidence itself.

Spiritual Entities. The Corporal "Body" and its "Soul."—Bearing in mind the definitions given to the terms "soul," "ghost," and "spirit," let us examine the conceptions entertained by Spiritualists respecting the soul, or the spiritual counterpart of the corporal body. Sir A. Conan Doyle tells us that it is exactly like the body itself, but independent of it. By means of "telepathy" it can

⁵ For example, Canon Rawlinson, Camden Professor of Ancient History. See his "Origin of Nations," n.d. (1877).

operate at a distance from the body, and, according to the testimony of those who have "passed beyond," is capable of leaving the body during sleep and paying them a visit.⁶

The possession of this spiritual double is not by any means the monopoly of our race, but is shared apparently by every object in creation, animate and inanimate. Cats and dogs, birds and horses, flowers and trees, houses and laboratories, clothes and furniture, all have souls for the world beyond.⁷

At death the soul quits the body for ever, and retains its human nature, at least, we are assured, for a time.⁸ This ethereal body is gifted with new powers, but is mentally and morally the same individual as when clothed in flesh.⁹ We learn from another source that when the soul leaves the body it is unclothed, as at birth. It is conscious, and finds itself standing by the dead body, seeing the corpse in bed. Then the thought of its nakedness appears, and clothing is immediately created by the very idea that suggested it.¹⁰ Ghosts just think of clothes, and clothes forthwith appear.¹¹ Those

⁶ "The New Revelation," 1918, pp. 41-42. Sir Oliver Lodge, "Raymond," 1916, p. 189.

⁷ See "Raymond," pp. 197 fol. Rev. Professor G. Henslow, "The Proofs of the Truths of Spiritualism," 1919, pp. 128, 165.

⁸ A. Russel Wallace, "On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," 1875, pp. 101-103.

⁹ *Id.*, p. 108.

¹⁰ Henslow, p. 131.

¹¹ Henslow, *id.*, p. 128.

who are gifted with clairvoyant faculties are able to see spirits or ghosts, and describe them as possessing hazy, transparent, or shadowy forms, through which any person can walk without producing the least effect upon them.¹² The late Rev. Joseph Leycester Lyne (Father Ignatius), who has been described as one of the most notable Churchmen of modern times,¹³ tells us that when a lad at school he saw a schoolfellow who was ill leave his bed and pass through a solid wall. His soul was also seen by other lads, although he had then been dead for three days.¹⁴ Father Ignatius declared that he was on one occasion suddenly transported, and found himself face to face with Jesus.¹⁵

According to Sir A. Conan Doyle, the evidence of what occurs to man after death is fairly full and consistent. The individual finds himself in a spirit body, the exact counterpart of his old one, but all disease, weakness, or deformity has passed away from it. This body stands or floats beside the old body, and is conscious of it and of the surrounding people. He discerns others in the room beside those who were there in life, and then, to his surprise, he drifts through all solid obstacles out upon

¹² *Id.*, p. 51.

¹³ J. Fitzgerald Molloy, "The Faiths of the People," 1892, vol. ii., p. 138.

¹⁴ "The Life of Father Ignatius," by the Baroness de Bertouch, n.d. (1904), pp. 26, 27.

¹⁵ *Id.*, pp. 358-359.

his new life. His ghost is not a glorified angel or goblin damned, but exactly himself, with his wisdom and his folly. Before entering this new life, the soul has a period of sleep which varies, sometimes lasting months, and on awakening therefrom is as weak as a new-born babe.¹⁶ The newly dead are quite unaware that they are dead, the conditions that prevail being entirely different from anything that religious teaching had prepared them for.¹⁷

It is possible for a man while still in the flesh to make his soul appear to a friend at a specified time,¹⁸ and the late Professor Hyslop, who rejected the usual evidence of Spiritualists, held that the appearance of such apparitions proves conclusively that survival after death has been scientifically proved.¹⁹

Life in Ghost-Land.—On awakening from sleep in ghost-land, the new-comer finds himself in possession of a "spiritual body" exactly like the one he possessed on earth, but without human passions, his material frame being left on earth to become food material for plants. He declares that when he passed to "spirit" life, he fell into a state of

¹⁶ "The New Revelation," pp. 83-89.

¹⁷ *Id.*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁸ See case of the Rev. C. Godfrey, and other instances given in Dr. James Hyslop's "Contact with the Other World," n.d. (1919), pp. 93-94.

¹⁹ Hyslop, *id.*, pp. 51, 480.

unconsciousness, and was taken at once into his mother's care. He remained in this condition for a fortnight, when he was revived by his mother, to be entranced with the beauty of the new world, with its trees and flowers, mountains and lakes.²⁰ Raymond assures us that if a body gets burnt on earth, a doctor in the ghost world comes round and helps to detach the soul from the body; terrible trouble is experienced sometimes with people who have been cremated too soon! There was once a man whose body was going to be cremated before he was really dead; so his relatives in ghost-land, hearing of the fate that threatened his mortal frame, brought a ghost doctor, who magnetised the body and helped the soul out; the spirit or ghost, being really an essence, "oozes out"!²¹ Ghosts apparently feel pain, but not so acutely as when in the flesh. Notwithstanding the ethereal region in which ghosts find themselves, their spiritual bodies possess ears, eyelashes, eyebrows, tongues, and teeth. If a man has unfortunately lost a limb in battle, it makes no difference; it is quite all right again when he reaches the other side. One man had a new tooth which came in place of one he had lost! When a body has been blown to pieces by shell-fire, it takes some time for the spirit body to

²⁰ Henslow, "The Religion of the Spirit World," 1920, pp. 1-2, 18-19; Henslow, "The Proofs of the Truth of Spiritualism," pp. 21, 26.

²¹ Sir Oliver Lodge, "Raymond," pp. 195-196.

complete itself.²² Some poor chaps are "literally shot into the spirit world."²³ Death, therefore, "does not make radical changes in our nature"; we are mentally the same as when on earth.²⁴ While ghosts persistently and modestly refuse to reveal their sex to friends on earth, the male spirit still finds its true mate; but there is neither sexuality nor childbirth in this world of ghosts.²⁵

Ghosts welcomed by their Friends.—The ghost, upon entering this land of shades, finds himself welcomed by his friends, who rush forward to shake him by the hand. Although the ghost has passed into a sphere which corresponds to his life on earth, all those whom he meets in its streets are apparently not on speaking terms; you may select your own friends there. If you meet those you are not fond of, you do not even bother to say to them, "How do you do?"²⁶ As men have lived on earth, so will their portion be in the world beyond. Thus ghosts pass into a sphere or condition which corresponds to the way they have passed their lives on earth; the most degraded go to "Hades," the lowest sphere of all. Hell itself does not exist; "that odious conception" is replaced by a kind of Re-

²² *Id.*, pp. 194-195, 298.

²³ *Id.*, p. 185.

²⁴ Hyslop, *op. cit.*, p. 375. Henslow, "Religion of the Spirit World," pp. 1-2.

²⁵ Henslow, *id.*, p. 4 n. Doyle, "The New Revelation," p. 98.

²⁶ "Raymond," pp. 204, 229-230.

formatory or Purgatory, a hospital for weakly souls, not a penal community. In this spiritual institution ghosts are able to improve their moral condition, if that be possible, to enable them to rise to higher spheres of being, or, on the other hand, to sink lower and lower still, and in the end eventually *disappear*, no one in ghost-land apparently knowing what becomes of them.²⁷

Good and Bad Ghosts.—The debased appear to waste away until they vanish.²⁸ Boys who cross the Borderland with "nasty ideas and vices" go to the Reformatory. The Rev. Professor G. Henslow assures us that he knew a man who lived solely for himself; his poor wife never saw him except at mealtimes. That man died. The ghosts said he went to Purgatory, where he still remains, although several years have passed.²⁹ One ghost declared that there are souls filled with the torture of remorse more bitter than anything the mind can conceive possible, and who are driven to despair when they are confronted with the record of their lives. Many ghosts long to return to earth again, as they find themselves unprepared and ill-adapted for the new existence!³⁰ God Himself has

²⁷ Henslow, "The Religion of the Spirit World," pp. 11, 15, 194. Doyle, "The New Revelation," pp. 90-91.

²⁸ Henslow, "The Proofs of the Truths of Spiritualism," p. 59.

²⁹ "Raymond," p. 230. Henslow, note 27, p. 47.

³⁰ Henslow, note 27, pp. 28, 79, 144.

ceased to be omnipotent; neither "He nor Christ can save a man if he determinedly refuses to be saved."³¹ Many of these wicked or mischievous ghosts are absolutely cold-blooded liars, and play all manner of pranks upon the people on earth. Sir A. Conan Doyle himself on one occasion visited Cheriton "dug-out," where disturbance of the soil had irritated the ghosts, who retaliated by throwing stones and pieces of brickwork. The distinguished author saw new brickwork which had been chipped by blows of missiles aimed by these spiteful ghosts. The Rev. Professor G. Henslow tells us that, in spite of his age, ghosts played him pranks, until he eventually obtained a promise from them to desist.³² It is satisfactory to learn that "all the people that's any good has black hair."³³

Eating, Smoking, and "Whisky-Sodas."—Man still desires to eat, drink, and be merry in Borderland. When ghosts first come, some want to eat meat; others call for whisky-sodas just as naturally as if they were still on the earth plane. One "chap" over there would have a cigar, so they manufactured one in a spiritual laboratory. Nourishment, like clothing, is as essential in the land beyond as it is on earth.³⁴

³¹ *Id.*, p. 61.

³² Doyle, "The New Revelation," pp. 123, 161-166. Henslow, note 28, p. 95.

³³ "Raymond," p. 269.

³⁴ *Id.*, pp. 197-198. Doyle, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

Mark Twain's Pipe.—The late Dr. James H. Hyslop, the American psychologist, and formerly Professor of Logic and Ethics in Columbia University, quotes an account in which the ghost of the celebrated humorist S. L. Clemens says that it had not yet discovered the sulphur pit, so "let's take a pipe and smoke away our trouble."³⁵

Schools in Ghost-Land.—In order that repentant ghosts may reach higher spheres, not only are teachers sent to them from other regions, but halls of learning are in existence, where lectures are given to prepare those who are anxious about their future. In the fifth sphere there is a kind of temple, crowds of ghosts passing through its portals. A preacher on earth may become a preacher in spirit-land, where, as the Rev. Professor G. Henslow suggests, they may talk more wisely perhaps than some of our clergy do when still on earth. In any case, it is at least satisfactory to learn that it is not always the parsons who go to the highest sphere first.³⁶

Joy in Ghost-Land.—Although there is nothing particularly edifying, as a rule, in what these ghosts write or say, and notwithstanding the fact that many go on fighting when they reach the other side, shouting, "Charge 'em, boys!" nevertheless the inhabitants of this world of ether appear to be

³⁵ Hyslop, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

³⁶ "Raymond," pp. 234, 263-265. Henslow, note 27, p. 5.

a jolly, happy folk, who sing and laugh and joke just like ordinary human beings. They greet their friends, both in the material and the spiritual worlds, with hand-shakes, and allow their dainty hands to be kissed by earthly friends before reabsorption into the medium's body. In this world beyond, where everything that is needful can be made, and whence people are sent into the physical body to have children on earth *because they do not have them in ghost-land*, the little children weave daisy-chains, plait the grasses, and play their games just as the mites did on earth. It is a land of flowers and trees, horses and cats, dogs and birds; of antelopes, lions, and lambs; with temples and reformatories, houses and factories, and schools for little children. Hence, as Sir Oliver Lodge declares, the surroundings of non-material existence are far more homely than most people believe.³⁷

The Trail of the Serpent.—Yet even in this land of mountains and lakes the "serpent" still seems to wind its sinuous course. Veracity, it is painful to learn, appears to be wanting in ghost-land.

³⁷ See the evidence in detail. Henslow, "Religion of the Spirit World," pp. 10-11, 62, n. 5. Henslow, "Truths," pp. 9, 72, 77-78, 147-149, 240. "Raymond," pp. 127, 130-131, 197, 199, 202-203, 229, 298, 336. Hereward Carrington, Ph.D., "Psychical Phenomena and the War," (1919), p. 300. Hyslop, "Contact with the Other World," pp. 367-368, quoting Dr. Hare.

Sir A. Conan Doyle tells us that some of the messages sent prove to be untrue! "Spirits," declares Professor Hyslop, "like living people, may contradict each other, but the contradiction is no evidence against their existence," because the evidence to prove that existence is almost overwhelming.³⁸ This sad disregard for truth may be due to defective memory, from which so many ghosts appear to suffer. Nor do ghosts seem particularly choice in the language in which they sometimes indulge. A Canadian soldier, whose soul reached the other world with the bayonet still sticking in him, tells us he got it "forlowing-whatonedamfoolsaid," and declared he might get into another scrap there "withabhlpoodyogerman," as they still continue to "scrap" each other in the land beyond.³⁹ Many ghosts prove false prophets, whose foretellings are not always to be trusted. In one instance a ghost went so far as to box the ears of the medium who was conveying its messages.⁴⁰ Thus we see that all is not peace and concord in that other world to which every one of us is bound, if we accept that New Revelation which, we are assured,

³⁸ Doyle, "The New Revelation," p. 52. Hyslop, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 329, 331, 480.

³⁹ See Dr. Hereward Carrington, "Psychical Phenomena and the War," p. 305. One spirit seen was armed with a sword. A. R. Wallace, "On Miraeles," p. 190, n.

⁴⁰ Henslow, "Proofs," pp. 39, 246.

is to replace the worn-out creed of Christendom.⁴¹

The Wail of the Ghosts.—Notwithstanding the bad manners and bad language frequently indulged in by the denizens of ghost-land, who sometimes “yell” their messages at the medium,⁴² and use expressions that savour more of the Seven Dials than of the Abode of Bliss, there is something truly pathetic in their lament that the friends left on earth are in so very many instances quite indifferent to those communications which they attempt to get through. Puerile and childish as the majority of the messages prove, they are regarded, both by Spiritualists and by the ghosts themselves, as satisfactory and conclusive evidence of things to come.

Methods of Communication. Séances “a Blessed Gift from God.”—It is, unfortunately, not in the power of ordinary mortals to be able to communicate unaided with their friends in the other world. In order to indicate their presence ghosts adopt various methods, which necessitate the personal attendance of a medium as a vehicle to convey the messages. Working without a medium is, in the language of the most popular exponent of

⁴¹ Doyle, pp. 28, 51, 70, 131. Alfred Russel Wallace, “On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism,” 1875, pp. 108, 114.

⁴² Arthur Conan Doyle, “The Vital Message,” n.d. (1919), p. 116.

this new religion, like an astronomer working without a telescope. But true mediums are very rare birds indeed; we are told by Spiritualists themselves that nearly all of them cheat, so that the truth of those revelations emanating from another world must necessarily depend upon the "snow-white" agents. The rapping of tables, voices through a trumpet, automatic writing, trance-mediumship, levitation, the playing upon musical instruments, as well as handling red-hot coal, are tricks which can be imitated by the common conjurer who claims no supernatural aid. The astronomer who had to rely on faulty telescopes would meet with little credence at the hands of his scientific brethren, and if it be true, as the devotees of this "new" faith assure us, that the majority of their instruments are imperfect, we may be justified in concluding that the trusty ones themselves are deluded victims of their own imaginations.

The New Pentecost.—As in the days of the Apostles, so now. At the modern séance, which, when used for the purpose of satisfying ourselves as to the condition of those whom we have lost, is "indeed a blessed gift from God,"⁴³ the events narrated in the Acts of the Apostles are repeated again and again. The sudden rushing mighty wind, the cloven tongues of fire, the speaking in

⁴³ Doyle, "The Vital Message," p. 118.

unknown tongues, are common occurrences now-a-days. Dr. Hooper, describing to Professor Henslow his personal experiences at a séance, says that a gentle breeze, gradually increasing in power, came over his hands; the legs became cold; other members of the circle shivered with the violence of the rushing mighty power. Presently, "globes" of misty luminosity appeared, which broke on contact with the table with a violent concussion. Dr. Hooper assures his psychic friend that he has been present at séances where the sitters have been glad to wrap themselves in anything that came handy, even on a summer's evening. "I have seen and felt the floor, walls, and contents of a room vibrate with the power of the mighty rushing wind." A piano weighing five hundredweight rocked, and the keys were played upon by a ghost. On one occasion a gentleman weighing over twelve stone was carried by these unseen forces from one side of the room to the other.⁴⁴

Modern Oracles.—To communicate with its earthly friends, the ghost appears to have a round-about way with anxious inquirers. It works through a second personality called a "control," which speaks during the trance of the medium, the medium being a mere passive machine, a kind of clerk and telegraph in one; nothing comes *from*

⁴⁴ Henslow, "The Religion of the Spirit World," pp. 203-204.

the medium, but every message, as Sir A. Conan Doyle explains, is *through* him.⁴⁵ During the trance wondrous and "miraculous" events take place. Lovely female forms emanate from the unconscious body of the medium, and a Venerable Archdeacon has been known to snatch the dainty hand of the beautiful spirit and impress it with a kiss before it was reabsorbed into the fleshy body from which it came.⁴⁶ In one instance the spectators beheld a woman four and a half inches taller than the medium leave her body, join the company, and engage each of them in conversation.⁴⁷

Modern Miracles—"Psychic Parturition."—This wonderful emanation is attached to the medium by a cord, which can be separated to allow the spirit to have a distinct existence. "Psychic parturition," as it has been called, is frequently seen by those who believe. Archdeacon Colley stated at the Church Congress in 1903 that both he and other witnesses saw a vaporous filament leave the left breast of the medium's coat to be "sucked" again into his body.⁴⁸ This "ectoplasm," to give it its psychic name, is described as a strange, white, dough-like substance which is capable of shaping

⁴⁵ "The Vital Message," p. 107.

⁴⁶ Henslow, "Proofs," pp. 239-241.

⁴⁷ Professor Crookes's episode. See Doyle, "The Vital Message," pp. 96-98.

⁴⁸ Henslow, "Proofs," pp. 237-238.

itself into parts or the whole of the body, and can be felt by the hand; while still attached to the medium, this ectoplasm is capable of flying back with such violence that several mediums have been injured with the force of the recoil. It is an *entirely new form both of matter and of energy*.⁴⁹ It is upon the evidence of such manifestations that the spiritualist of to-day relies to prove the absolute truth of his new religion, and that old-time miracles still form part of Nature's scheme.

Live Worms—Tables that make Love and Laugh.
—Commonplace vulgarity is a fundamental and characteristic feature of the modern séance, a fact which is admitted by Spiritualists themselves.⁵⁰ Yet the production of live worms, pictures, and books; the dancing and careering of tables which make amorous attempts to get into a lady's lap, or which shake as if laughing; flower-pots which get broken—all these wondrous manifestations, produced at solemn meetings of Spiritualists which open with prayer, are held out to us as awe-inspiring evidence of "the proofs of the truths of Spiritualism." If a profane and unbelieving world dismiss such testimony, and hold that what believers con-

⁴⁹ Doyle, "The Vital Message," p. 110. This slimy substance has also been named "teleplasm" by Dr. Schrenck-Notzing. Hereward Carrington, "Psychical Phenomena and the War," p. 134. See also case of the medium Monck in "My Life," by Dr. A. Russel Wallace.

⁵⁰ Hyslop, "Contact with the Other World," p. 52.

sider to be miraculous is naught but mere trickery on the part of the mediums, most of whom are admittedly frauds, it may be met with the crushing rejoinder—so careful are the sincere devotees of this new faith to eliminate all possible deception—that the prostrate and *nude* form of the lady medium, showing *nothing* was concealed, is surely absolute and overwhelming testimony of the truth and spirituality of their claim!⁵¹ Nakedness has ever been the symbol of innocence; pristine innocence such as this surely precludes fraud, and puts to shame the paltry scoffer who dares to suggest it!

Still, while so many leading Spiritualists pin their faith to magical manifestations, there are others who assure us that “levitation, raps, lights, and other physical phenomena are no more evidence for the existence of spirits than is the fall of a tree.”⁵²

If ghosts chide their earthly friends with indifference, they themselves appear to take great interest in the affairs of the world so recently vacated. Sometimes they will come and listen intently whilst friends on earth read the newspapers to them; on other occasions they give saintly advice to their lady friends to have nothing to do with the sons of men, such beasts and tyrants are

⁵¹ See “Raymond,” pp. 221-224. Henslow, “Proofs,” p. 92. H. Carrington, “Psychical Phenomena, p. 134.

⁵² Hyslop, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

they. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace announced nearly fifty years ago that while spirits may commune with higher intelligences than themselves, they possess no more knowledge of God Himself than we do. But it has been revealed by the ghosts, since the death of that great naturalist, that the Creator is a *woman*, and not a "male"!⁵³ Judging from these remarkable revelations, we appear to be on the verge of a new development in the religious history of the human race. Never before has it been vouchsafed to man to have such wondrous truths revealed. Surely no human could by mere research discover what the ghosts themselves reveal to those whom they love. Yet there would appear to be times when all is not well in ghost-land; even there signs unmistakable show themselves of repentance, when spirit voices may be heard singing sadly: "All we, like sheep, have gone astray."⁵⁴

Automatic Writing.—Fortunately the departed have resource to one of the most easy and important methods of communicating with their earthly friends. By means of "automatic writing," not only are loved ones able to furnish us with a body of new doctrine not otherwise obtainable, but

⁵³ Henslow, "Proofs," pp. 32-35. Wallace, "On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," 1875, p. 116. Elliot O'Donnell, *The Menace of Spiritualism*," p. 99.

⁵⁴ Henslow, "Proofs," p. 77.

the actual authenticity of this new doctrine is placed beyond all sceptical cavil by the fact that messages are frequently in the *handwriting of the ghost himself*. Thus, on one occasion, when Archdeacon Colley wrote from spirit-land, his friends rejoiced to find his communication had been written and signed by himself. Automatic writing is, therefore, the most direct means of communication between friends on the right and wrong sides of the grave, and is becoming one of the most fashionable methods of spreading the vital doctrines of this new revelation. There are fashions in the methods of the inhabitants of the other world, just as we have here on our own mundane plane. All we have to do is to be on our guard against false messages which naughty ghosts attempt to transmit, but such messages will for ever be set at rest when one is able to swear to the identity of the script of the transmitter.⁵⁵

Sometimes it is true that misgivings arise on the part of the Spiritualists, who question whether these inspired writings are really the work of their spiritual friends. The late Professor Hyslop, for example, admits that automatic writing, which, as he says, is supposed to be the act of some foreign intelligence, may in reality always be due to the

⁵⁵ Doyle, "New Revelation," p. 61. Henslow, "Proofs," pp. 42-43, 158. See photographs of messages in both these works.

unconscious act of the subject himself, even though we suppose the instigating causes to be foreign, and though popularly supposed to be due to the ghosts themselves. On the other hand, believers are able to produce actual photographs, which to their mind eliminate all possibility of error, and prove conclusively the genuineness of "spirit photography."⁵⁶

Spirits of the "Stillborn."—As scientific men on the earth plane have shown matter to be indestructible, so have Spiritualists taught us that in spirit-land no germ of life is ever lost. Not only do children dying soon after birth find their allotted sphere "Over There," but the most embryotic stillborn child "passes to the spirit world to begin the existence which it should have begun in the material world."⁵⁷ Tiny mites who have never breathed in this world of sin, whose lives may have been severed at any time from the moment of conception—broken by abortion or by premature stillbirth—pass into the celestial regions, where nurses await them, to clothe and teach them in special schools for premature souls. There they develop into beautiful ghosts, though

⁵⁶ Hyslop, "Contact with the Other World," p. 104. See photograph in Doyle, "The Vital Message," also those given by Henslow.

⁵⁷ See "The Nurseries of Heaven," edited by the Rev. G. Vale Owen and (Miss) H. A. Dallas, 1920, p. 25.

they lack the stern virtues, because they do not bring that connection which naturally exists between the brain and the organs of sense. "Over There" names are given them, and some time or other, whilst still little ones, or it may be when a mature condition has been reached in ghost-land, their spirit forms will visit the earth and surprise parents who were in total ignorance of their spiritual existence, and nestle unseen against their mothers' breasts.⁵⁸

Devils in Ghost-Land.—Besides good spirits and spirits in the process of making good, ghost-land is unfortunately infested with a host of wicked disembodied souls, the fiends and evil spirits who represent our backward brothers. Sir A. Conan Doyle assures us that he himself has received and been deceived by messages from them, and he has heard of messages of a blasphemous character being received. Widely false accounts may be suddenly interpolated among truthful ones. If we reason with these bad entities, and pray for them to help them on their way, a marked difference will be the result. Our author relates an instance in which he was called in to check a very noisy ghost in an old house where a crime had probably been committed. When the great novelist got in touch with the disturber, he reasoned with it, prayed for its future welfare, and in return received an

⁵⁸ *Id.*, pp. 32, 41, 75, 93, 140, 170-171.

assurance that it would mend its ways; and it did. Now "all is quiet in the old house."⁵⁹

Obsession and Possession.—Why ghosts have a preference for haunting certain houses is one of those mysteries which Spiritualists may be able to solve in the near future, but at the present moment no satisfactory explanation has been advanced to explain such phenomena. But the terrible pandemonium which these disturbers of the peace inflict on the innocent is well known. Not only do they walk right through wardrobes and brick walls, but they shout and rave, pitch fire-irons about, make the very beds rock to and fro, and disturb the slumbers of the peaceful. They will take possession of a person, and inflict the most terrible of tortures, until means are used to induce them to leave, unless they take their departure at their own sweet will.⁶⁰

Pure Spirits who have never been Men.—Besides these ghosts that have at some time or other been in possession of a body of flesh, there are in existence in the spirit world many others who have never known what a serious encumbrance the possession of a frame of flesh is to the desire of a spiritual life. Some of these essentially pure spirits have no direct

⁵⁹ "The Vital Message," pp. 64-65, 119-120.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, one of the latest publications dealing with these ghosts: Violet Tweedale, "Ghosts I have Seen," 1920, pp. 18, 266-271.

connection either with this world of sin, or with those in spirit-land who are in a state of probation, but are beautiful angelic creatures, who reach ghost-land from regions of bliss afar; they are, as a great botanist tells us, spirits from other worlds who have not lived on earth.⁶¹ But unfortunately, at the extreme other end of the scale, terrible beings to look upon, grotesque and hideous, are continually being seen by those who possess "second sight." Mrs. Tweedale, the Spiritualist and novelist, tells us that on one occasion she saw about a dozen small forms, half men, half animal, playing leap-frog in her bedroom; their heads resembled those of apes. The Princess Frederica of Hanover told her that she herself had seen several abnormal animal forms quite unknown on this earth. Many other fearful creatures—half men and half horses, or half men and half goats—have appeared suddenly, only to return as mysteriously and as quickly as they came.⁶² Even disbelievers in the "new religion" tell us that they themselves believe in the existence of bad spirits, that undesirables in spirit form may come to us at times, and that it is reasonable to believe houses may be haunted by ghosts immediately after a death; and it is possible to hold such a belief, in spite of the fact that Spiritualism is denounced

⁶¹ Henslow, "Proofs," pp. 142-143.

⁶² "Ghosts I have Seen," pp. 123-125, 209.

as "a vice."⁶³ It may be that some of the phantom forms are the spirits of men which have returned to acquaintances on earth in the shape of dogs or other animals. Mrs. Tweedale relates the story of a Major Steward, who died in 1876, and who, before his death, threatened to return in one of his dogs. To frustrate this, all his dogs were killed, but, not to be done, he did appear in dog form!⁶⁴

Hence we find that the system of belief which is now offered to suffering humanity as a new revelation and as a sure solace for our ills—a system which is to replace the ancient creed of Christendom, because that creed no longer answers man's need—is a system which has for its foundation that ancient belief in ghosts and ghostly manifestations, and which is shared by advanced philosopher and by primitive peasant alike. It is a system that demands very careful investigation, not only by the follower of the Christ, but by all men who take the trouble to think. When one remembers that the belief in ghosts and in spirits is held by the most cultured representatives of our race, that the truth of that belief has in recent years been declared by learned judges and discussed in learned societies, it behoves us all to give it serious consideration, instead of attempting to dismiss it as a contemptible superstition. An eminent ethnologist,

⁶³ O'Donnell, "The Menace of Spiritualism," pp. 37, 38, 92, 136.

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 118.

who shared the friendship of Darwin and Huxley, Newman and Gladstone, once declared before one of our learned societies that he did not hesitate to express his own conviction that a total disbelief in supernatural visitations of any kind is irrational and unphilosophical.⁶⁵ A subject which has received the sanction of distinguished men is one that merits careful investigation, and must therefore be treated with calmness and not with levity. It is in this spirit that I invite the reader's attention to the evidence, as well as the conclusions drawn from that evidence, which will be given in the following chapters.

⁶⁵ George Harris, F.S.A., F.R.H.S., F.L.A.S. (Registrar of the Court of Bankruptcy, 1862-68), in a paper read before the London Anthropological Society, 1874.

CHAPTER II

SPIRITUALISTIC BELIEFS AMONG EUROPEAN AND OTHER CIVILISED RACES

IN the foregoing chapter we have given our attention to the evidence which the advocates of Spiritualism contend go to prove their claim that this new religion rests upon a scientific basis. It will now be necessary for us to examine other beliefs of like nature which are or have been held by various civilised peoples, in order that we may compare these beliefs with those for which the modern Spiritualist contends. If the testimony of many recent witnesses be received, there exist no reasonable grounds for rejecting other evidence of a similar character, provided such evidence is substantiated by witnesses of equal reliability. In both cases we must remember that the unquestioned sincerity of any individual witness by no means proves the truth of that which he himself holds to be the truth, and nothing but the truth. What he states may indeed be *true*, but not the *whole* truth. Herein lies the crux of all human testimony.

Inhabitants of the Invisible World.—In out-of-the-way places of the civilised world, where the modern inrush of extraneous custom has in great measure left untouched the superstitious beliefs and primitive religious conceptions of the people, we find everywhere a deep-seated faith in the existence of an invisible world—a world which is, for the most part, an exact reproduction of our own—where spirits who have once been men carry on their mode of life just as they did before the great leveller handed them over to join the great majority. That this world, although unseen to most men, is nevertheless a *real* world can be shown by the fact that persons gifted with certain powers are able to see and to describe it to those who lack this gift of “second sight.” Even then it is possible for the “seer” to convey his power to others, for by placing his foot on theirs, or a hand on their shoulders, they are able to see with their own eyes those remarkable things in the spirit realm of which they had only heard. For example, in the Scottish Highlands and elsewhere, ghost-land is inhabited by a host of fairies or elfin people, called “sith” in Gaelic. The sith are dressed in green, and come from the west. They possess cattle, work at different trades, have festivities, and live in fairy-land just as they lived on earth, but in spirit, not in flesh. They are, therefore, a race of beings the exact counterpart of man in person, occupations,

and pleasures, but are invisible to ordinary eyes, moving or rather gliding and floating silently, and live underground in hills and rock. Like ordinary mortals, they require food, so they feed on the "toradh" or spiritual part of earthly nourishment. At night-time they issue forth, sometimes assuming the shape of red deer, at others riding horses with their faces towards the tails. The Devil himself is by no means an unfamiliar personage, but has been frequently seen and described. He is crop-eared and shaped like a he-goat, has feet like those of a horse, and always disappears when the cock crows. Beside the fairies there exist other spirits, which have distinctive names, the ghosts of dead men and the shades or doubles of living persons—the "baucans" and the "tamhasgs." If the sincerity of those who see these visions is to be taken as evidence of their reality, then there can be no possible question as to their truth.¹ The spirits of the dead frequently return to old haunts and visit their friends. On one occasion a woman who had lost her husband saw him after death sitting by the fireside. In many places a drink of

¹ See the data collected from oral sources by the Rev. John Gregorson Campbell, "Superstitions of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland," Glasgow, 1900. Also by the same author, "Witchcraft and Second Sight in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland," Glasgow, 1902. Both of these are invaluable works dealing with beliefs which, in their original form, are becoming extinct.

water is placed near a corpse in case the dead return.²

The visits of ghosts at different times are not always motiveless. Their object is frequently to reveal to earthly friends the place in which title-deeds are secreted, or where money and other valuables have been buried. In the fifteenth century, two men were tried before a jury for causing a certain disembodied spirit to appear in order to reveal where hidden treasure lay. It seems that the ghost in question was induced to show itself by being bribed by the promise that if it revealed the secret place, a burnt offering, consisting of the dead body of a Christian man, would be presented to it. The evidence showed that the compact was honourably kept by the visitor from the other world, but the two men and their friends cheated the ghost by substituting "a certain fowl called a cock, which was baptised in holy water, given a Christian name, and was then slain and offered as a whole burnt offering," a proof, at least, that if covenants are not kept by men on earth, they are honestly carried out in spirit-land.³

Like the spirit of the Red Indian, which, as A. Russel Wallace and other Spiritualists tell us, disappeared mysteriously through a skirting board with nothing to show how the act had been

² Campbell, "Witchcraft," pp. 173, 175, 210-211.

³ Dr. A. Jessopp, "Random Roaming," 1894, pp. 109-112.

accomplished, no material or other obstacle can prevent a ghost putting in an appearance.⁴ Dr. A. Jessopp relates that in 1879 he visited Lord Orford's library at Mannington Hall. He had had *a great deal to think about and some considerable mental strain*. After midnight, while writing in the library, he saw the figure of a man examining the pile of books he had just finished with.⁵ Silence, however, is by no means a characteristic of these visitants. The spirits frequently announce their presence by making "loud and dreadful noises, sometimes rattling in the old hall like a coach and six, and rumbling up and down the staircase like the trundling of bowls or cannon-balls."⁶ Bad ghosts will take all manner of liberties, and drive to desperation the unfortunate victims who still remain in the flesh. The modern Greeks, who have the utmost horror of cremation, will burn the body of a dead man, if other means have failed, to prevent his ghost plaguing the living. In Wallachia it is the custom to drive a long nail into the skull, and place the thorny stem of a wild-rose bush upon the body, so that its winding-sheet may become entangled with it, and thus prevent the dead man's ghost attempting to arise. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a quarrelsome

⁴ Wallace, "My Life," vol. ii., p. 340.

⁵ "Frivola," 2nd ed., 1907, pp. 175-179.

⁶ W. Carew Hazlitt, "Popular Antiquities," 1870, vol. iii., p. 120.

and ill-natured peasant was murdered on the island of Mykoni, in the Ægean Archipelago. Two days after his body was buried it was mooted that, during the night, he had been seen to attack people from behind, tumble their goods about, and put out their lamps. On the tenth day the body was taken out of the grave, and the town butcher opened the chest and extracted the heart, which was burnt on the sea-shore. Notwithstanding this precaution, the dead man continued to beat the folks at night, breaking doors and roofs of houses, and tearing the people's clothes. The inhabitants therefore left their houses, and slept out in the open. Processions and sprinkling of holy water were resorted to without avail; it was not until the bad man's corpse had been entirely consumed by fire that peace was restored to that island in the Ægean Sea.⁷ It is probable that the restless spirit of the deceased was due to his murderer not being brought to justice. Sir Walter Scott relates a case in which the ghost of a murdered man accused two Highlanders of killing him and concealing his body; and it was on the evidence of the dead man's ghost that Duncan Terig and Alexander Bain MacDonald were charged with wilful murder in the Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh, in the year 1749. This case

⁷ See the account quoted from Tournefort, "Voyage to the Levant," by the Rev. H. F. Tozer, "Researches in the Highlands of Turkey," 1869, vol. ii., pp. 92-95.

alone should prove how serious and real the old belief is in a world of spiritual entities capable of influencing and directing the actions of the human race.⁸ At the very time that these men were being tried for their lives on the evidence of a ghost, a celebrated seer and mystic was unfolding a "new religion," a religion which has at this day numerous adherents scattered all over the globe. Between the years 1743 and 1745 Baron Emanuel Swedenborg claimed to have been called by the Lord to unfold the *true* doctrine of the Divine Word, and in 1749 gave to the world that revelation which has been declared to be not less important than that of St. John the Divine. He said that for years it had been his privilege to associate with the angels in heaven and the devils in hell. As the direct result of that intimacy with the celestial world, we have had bequeathed to us those marvellous and vivid descriptions of things to come which place in the shade that "Vital Message" upon which a new religion and a new science is to be founded. In heaven the angels are men who live in society, as men do on earth. They have houses and gardens, flower-beds and fields. There are cities with roads, streets, and squares. Habitations, ever so beautiful, contain drawing-rooms and bed-chambers too! Beautiful garments, that are so very real that they can be seen and felt, are worn by these inhabitants,

⁸ Scott, "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft," Letter X.

who are given in marriage, and whose children are goodness and truth. But in the other place to which the wicked are consigned a raging fire exists, and in this furnace the denizens of the pit—clothed, it is true, but in ragged, filthy garments—pass their spiritual lives. Every child in heaven goes to school and becomes an angel; and all angels have mouths and tongues and ears just like men.⁹

“Miracles” of To-day and Yesterday as Evidence of the Supernatural.—It has been said, and recently said, that the day of miracles is not past: all that is necessary is to have the power of seeing them.¹⁰ If it be also true, as we are assured it is, that the rank sceptic is likewise becoming “a thing of the past,” no sane mind will dare dispute the foregoing proposition. For we have it on good authority, which none but a sceptic would question, that the dead are still raised to life, epileptics are cured by drinking magic draughts, and devils cast out of human bodies as dexterously by an Ignatius of the nineteenth century as by a Xavier in the sixteenth. In the presence of no less than five witnesses, the Monk of Llanthony raised a girl who had been dead for two hours to life again. He placed a relic of the

⁹ E. G. Kelly, “The Philosophy of Existence,” 1870, p. 252 fol.

¹⁰ In the year 1920, Violet Tweedale, “Ghosts I have Seen,” pp. 8, 12.

true Cross on her breast, and said: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I say unto thee, Arise." She was completely and supernaturally cured of her disease—typhoid fever. A woman curses the bald head of the priest, and behold the hair of her only child falls from its head "in the twinkling of an eye." At another time a man who had been crushed to death by a crate had his corpse sprinkled with some Lourdes water, and in an instant arose, stood upon his feet, and walked off to his lodgings without a bruise or a scratch!¹¹

Miracle and Nature.—If by miracle we mean an act brought about by the direct suspension of natural law in order that some unknown factor may intervene—an act which is, in fact, a defiance of Nature and of her methods—then there can be no question that such happenings must be classed as miraculous. But it must be remembered that the scientific attitude toward unexplained phenomena is that all events have, and must necessarily have, a *natural* cause, although at the time of their occurrence we may not possess the necessary knowledge to explain any particular event. It is no true answer to assert, because certain men of science give such and such an explanation, that that explanation *must* be the correct one, when it does not include every particle of evidence, and at

¹¹ "The Life of Father Ignatius, O.S.B.," by the Baroness de Bertouch, n.d. (1904), pp. 89-91, 116-119, 200, 493-495.

the same time exclude every other explanation. Science claims no knowledge *beyond* Nature herself, but it does hold and maintain that all things can be interpreted in accordance with natural law, and that only our ignorance hastens other expositions and substitutes other agents of a *super-natural* character. Therefore, he who maintains that natural law is unalterable is justified in refusing to give credence to those stories which experience shows to be against that law.

Xavier's Miracles compared with those of Father Ignatius.—St. Francis Xavier was born in the early part of the sixteenth century, and in the year 1541 left Lisbon for the East. It is stated that all the marvellous actions of his life were supported by the evidence of sworn witnesses, who came forward when the processes were formed by order of the King of Portugal. That evidence went to show that he raised many persons from the dead, restored sight to the blind, turned salt water into sweet, cured the leper and the deformed, and had the gift of tongues. No less than fourteen witnesses bear testimony that he spoke languages he had never learnt. Eyewitnesses declare that on several occasions they saw him elevated in the air.¹² What Ignatius could accomplish in the last century would be no more difficult to Xavier in the six-

¹² See the "Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier," by Henry James Coleridge (of the Society of Jesus), 2 vols., 1872.

teenth, and the miraculous powers attributed to them both were no greater than those claimed at the present day by believers in the "proofs of the truths of Spiritualism."

"Miraculous" Phenomena in the East : Egypt.—Edward William Lane, who has been declared one of the greatest English Arabic scholars, and whose monumental book describing the "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians" still remains a standard work, states that a few days after his arrival in the country of the Nile his curiosity was aroused on the subject of magic by a circumstance related to him by the English Consul-General. Several articles having been stolen from the official's residence, he sent for a celebrated magician, who, on arrival, promised to cause the exact image of the thief to appear to any lad under the age of puberty. A boy was called in; the magician drew in the palm of the lad's hand a certain diagram, and in the centre of this he poured a little ink, desiring the boy to gaze steadfastly into the ink. Presently objects appeared, then the image of the guilty person, his stature, countenance, and dress were described. On this one of the labourers was fetched from the garden, brought before the master, and immediately confessed that he was the thief.

At a subsequent period Lane, desiring to test for himself the marvellous powers of the native magicians, arranged to meet a descendant of the

Prophet, who professed to work through the agency of good spirits. A lad about eight or nine years of age, who happened to be passing, was called in, and a chafing-dish, containing some frankincense and coriander-seed, together with live charcoal, was placed in front of him. The magician then took hold of the boy's hand, drew in the palm a magic square, into the centre of which he poured a little ink, and desired the lad to look into it. Muttering an incantation, the magician told the boy to describe what he saw. Presently the magician addressed himself to Lane, and asked him if he wished the boy to see any person who was absent or dead. What followed had better be described in the great scholar's own words. "I named Lord Nelson, of whom the boy had evidently never heard, for it was with much difficulty that he pronounced the name after several trials. The magician desired the boy to say to the Sultan (who had appeared in the magic ink), 'My master salutes thee, and desires thee to bring Lord Nelson; bring him before my eyes, that I may see him, speedily.' The boy then said so, and almost immediately added, 'A messenger is gone, and has returned, and brought a man dressed in a black [dark blue is described by the Egyptians as black] suit of European clothes; the man has lost his left arm.' He then paused for a moment or two, and, looking more intently and more closely into the ink, said, 'No, he has not

lost his left arm, but it is placed to his breast.' This correction made his description more striking than it had been without it, since Lord Nelson generally had his empty sleeve attached to the breast of his coat; but it was the *right* arm that he had lost. Without saying that I suspected the boy had made a mistake, I asked the magician whether the objects appeared in the ink as if actually before the eyes, or as if in a glass, which makes the right appear left. He answered that they appeared as in a mirror. This rendered the boy's description faultless."

On other occasions sceptics had been confounded with accurate descriptions of their own relatives. Shakespeare "was described with the most minute correctness, both as to person and dress;" neither Lane himself nor others were able to penetrate these mysteries, and he asked the reader not to allow the account of them to induce in his mind any degree of scepticism with respect to other portions of his work. The highest attainment in magic consists in the knowledge of "the most great name" of God, known only to the prophets and apostles, by which means the dead can be raised to life, the living killed, and the prophet transport himself from place to place.¹³

"Miracle" in India.—Probably no country in the world possesses so many saints and "miracle"

¹³ "Manners," etc., 5th ed., 1860, pp. 263-275.

workers as are to be found in India. The most striking characteristics of her people are said to be imaginativeness, emotionalism, mysticism, credulity, impressionability, combined with religious fervour, all of which they possess to an exaggerated degree.¹⁴ Many instances could be given of wonderful cures made by religious ascetics, of children whom they have restored to health.¹⁵ Yogis can rise to the skies, fly through space, pass through keyholes, and cause earthquakes and storms to arise. They can assume any form they wish; enter another person's body and make it their own. Some years ago the Foreign Secretary at Calcutta saw a man poised on three sticks, which were then removed, and he remained sitting in the air without support. In 1887 Mr. E. B. Havell, Principal of the Government School of Art, Calcutta, saw a yogi who was held in great respect place himself behind a curtain; the curtain was then withdrawn, and the man appeared as if in a trance, poised in the air several feet from the ground, absolutely motionless, and he remained in this condition for five minutes.¹⁶ Spirits make known their desires among the peoples of India, just as they

¹⁴ J. Campbell Oman, "The Mystics, Ascetics, and Saints of India," 1903, p. 14.

¹⁵ J. C. Oman, "Cults, Customs, and Superstitions of India," 1908, pp. 5-6. Also "Mystics," etc., p. 3.

¹⁶ Sir Monier Monier-Williams, "Buddhism," 1889, pp. 244-245, 251. Havell, "Benares, the Sacred City," 1905, p. 117.

do among the Spiritualists in the home of their rulers. The Rev. C. Phillips Cape commenced to build a school, but the walls fell down no less than four times, because, as the builder explained, the spirits of the dead objected.¹⁷

Three years before the last-mentioned incident, Dr. Moncure Daniel Conway made his "pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East." Whilst at Calcutta he saw a most remarkable trick performed by a native conjurer in a tent which contained nothing but a plain wooden table. The tent was without floor and open at the top, and was flooded with light. The performer, who was naked except for a loin-cloth, came in with both hands filled with tiny figures with legs made of straw, sealing-wax heads, and buttons to stand upon, each figure being about two inches high. He stood them all in the centre of the table, moved away two yards, and then talked to them. Presently the figures began to stir, to move, and to dance. Beating time with a wand, but still keeping his distance of two yards and talking to them all the time, he made them dance in all directions. Dr. Conway carefully examined the table, and passed his arm above the dolls in order to discover whether any invisible threads might be attached to them. The conjurer asked him, through the interpreter, where he wished

¹⁷ Cape, "Benares, the Stronghold of Hinduism," n.d., p. 198.

the dolls to dance, and they moved in every direction he indicated. Dr. Conway then requested that two of them should be separated from the rest and dance apart, the others remaining stationary. This was done, and finally the conjurer desired him to put a penny on the table; the coin danced across the table and pitched itself into a little box. Dr. Conway concludes by declaring that it was the most inexplicable performance he ever saw, and the only one for which he could imagine no explanation.¹⁸ If we are justified in following the reasoning of present-day Spiritualists, and give a spiritual explanation to that of which we are unable to conceive a natural one, it would be quite logical to say that these dancing dolls danced because "the spirits moved them."

China : Automatic Writing and " Devil " Lore.—

Perhaps there is no great State in the civilised world which has given so much attention and encouragement to the education of its citizens as the Celestial Empire, nor which has done so much to instil the vital principles of virtue into every member of the community. Yet no great nation could be named which is more addicted to superstitious practices than the modern Chinese. Every event of their daily life is influenced by men and by women whom we in our own land once called wizards and witches. Tales which excite

¹⁸ " My Pilgrimage," 1906, pp. 254-256.

the mirth of those who are not Chinamen are implicitly believed to be true and part of the natural order of things. If a fortune-teller informs a man that he will die at four o'clock, and the man does actually die at that very hour, is not that proof positive that the fortune-teller is a true prophet, in spite of the sceptic who might suggest that the part the imagination played would be sufficient to account for the man's earthly departure? Superstition in China is part of the law of the land, for a man can recover damages if spirits still disturb his peace when he has employed a diviner to expel them.¹⁹

But the Chinaman is no fool; more logical in his superstition than his brother of the West, he consistently believes that if his body is mutilated while in the flesh, his spiritual body will be deficient in like manner when it arrives in ghost-land. Hence the so-called cruelty of his punishments for crime, and the reason why he so persistently and decidedly refuses to undergo surgical operations which might be to his advantage in this world. Have not headless horses with their headless riders—yea, and cats minus their own headpieces, too—been seen repeatedly in spirit form in this England of ours?

¹⁹ See Dugald Christie, C.M.G., "Thirty Years in Moukden," 1914, pp. 58-59. Chester Holcombe, "The Real Chinaman," 1895, p. 152.

In China, those who profess to communicate with the departed are nearly always old women. In 1867 Archdeacon Gray of Hong-Kong was the guest of an old lady who resided at Canton, and who was anxious to communicate with her husband. A well-dressed lady of prepossessing appearance was called in; she erected a small altar, and on this altar placed an offering of fruits and cakes. Then, burying her head in her hands, she appeared to go into a trance, and, singing an incantation, declared that the spirit of the old lady's husband was once more in the family circle. All were greatly moved, some of them bursting into tears. Through the witch as a medium, the spirit of the old man informed the family of his whereabouts, and the happiness he was enjoying. He spoke of several family topics, particularly dwelling upon the condition of one of his sons, who had left home since he died. These references astonished the members of the family, and naturally confirmed their belief in the supernatural powers of the medium. After exhorting the widow to dry her tears and leave him in peace for the future, the spirit once more took his departure for ghost-land. Upon another occasion Gray was called to a house which had been bewitched. All about the hall lay scattered broken vases and pots, which had been cast from their places by some malignant, invisible agency. When evil spirits haunt a dwelling

the proprietor calls in the services of an exorcist, generally a Taoist priest. A paper image is made representing the human figure, and the spirit is called upon to enter it, after which the paper is removed to the street and set on fire.²⁰

Spirit writing is very popular with the well-educated classes in China, and the professional "medium" is visited by night as well as by day by those anxious about their future. After prayers and offerings have been made, the votary calls upon the medium to inform him what the spirit says. The professor and his client go to a small table, the top of which has been covered with sand, and proceeds to write mystic characters by means of a specially shaped pencil. The pencil moves, apparently of its own accord, rapidly over the surface of the table, writing mystic characters which only the professor and his assistant understand. These are translated into Chinese, so that the client may have a correct knowledge of what the spirit has stated in reply.²¹

The "Devil" Theory of Disease in China.—Professional exorcists are continually called upon in the Celestial Empire to exercise their art, in order to eject evil spirits or devils who make their temporary home in the body of some poor sufferer, and who prey on his very vitals. And if one holds

²⁰ Archdeacon J. H. Gray, "China," 1878, vol. ii., pp. 18-19, 22-23, 25.

²¹ Gray, *id.*, pp. 21-22.

up to scorn the mandarin who shares the superstitions of his more illiterate countrymen, it must not be forgotten that American missionaries have declared for this old theory of demoniacal possession, and that in our own land devils have been cast out with a loud voice at the latter end of the "wonderful century."

Disease and the "Devil" Theory in the Middle Ages and Before.—But demon possession, as the true cause of disease, has been out of fashion in the Occident since more material factors have taken the place of spiritual ones. Medical and other works no longer picture devils actually issuing out of the mouths of men, as they did in the Middle Ages; and until the revival in recent years of a terrible epidemic, which was the curse of those times, it might have been thought that no attempted resuscitation would have brought to life that theory of disease, which at one time received the sanction and the support of Christian divines, backed up, as it was, by an "open Bible." That men should once again give credence to stories, like those narrated by Josephus, of devils entering and leaving men at their own sweet will, and that physical causes are not the true cause and origin of many diseases, is a matter which those of us who complaisantly believe in man's progress may well lay to heart. The author of the "Antiquities of the Jews," whoever he may have been, tells us

that God bestowed wisdom on Solomon so great that he exceeded all the Ancients; and he left behind him forms of exorcism for expelling demons, so that they never return again to torment the sufferer. Josephus himself had seen his own countryman, Eleazar, expel devils in the presence of the Emperor Vespasian and his army. Eleazar put a ring containing a magic root to the nostrils of the demoniac, and then drew the demon out through the man's nostrils. To show his great skill, the exorcist placed a "bason" full of water a little way off, and commanded the wicked spirit to kick it over, that the spectators might have ocular proof that he had verily and indeed left the man. All this was carried out satisfactorily, so that all men may know of the extraordinary virtues of Solomon, and of a "science" which is "useful and sanative to men."²²

Modern Revival of the "Devil" Theory of Disease among Spiritualists.—Among the recent converts to demoniac obsession, as taught in the New Testament, the late James H. Hyslop, Ph.D., LL.D., Secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research, and formerly Professor of Logic and Ethics in Columbia University, stands pre-eminent. Dr. Hyslop held that spirits "are certainly as legitimate objects of interest as drugs and pills or similar means of experiment," and

²² "Antiq.," vol. viii., ch. ii.

regarded the existence of discarnate spirits as scientifically proved. He assured us that he fought against the devil doctrine for ten years after he was convinced that survival after death was proved. This devil doctrine, he explained, is "the supernormal influence of a foreign consciousness on the mind or organism of a sensitive person," and its chief interest lies in the revolutionary effect it will have in the field of medicine, rendering it probable that thousands of cases diagnosed as paranoiac may yield to other treatment. The doubter and the sceptic, so he told us, have no right to speak on the subject, and, moreover, are to receive "short shrift." "Any man who does not accept the existence of discarnate spirits and the proof of it is either ignorant or a moral coward. I give him short shrift, and do not propose any longer to argue with him on the supposition that he knows anything about the subject. Consequently, I am in a situation to investigate and weigh facts that *suggest* obsession."²³

Dogmatism, therefore, no longer belongs exclusively to the past; that has also undergone a spiritual resurgence. He who, in the light of this twentieth century, dares to doubt the *truth* of obsession no longer has any right to be heard,

²³ "Life after Death," n.d. (1918), pp. 305-308. Italics are mine.

even though it be admitted that the data upon which it is founded may merely "suggest" its truth. It was left for Dr. Hyslop to "discover" obsession in the twentieth century, and, in consequence, to express his conviction that the belief in that old superstition would have "its innings again"!²⁴ It certainly had its "innings" in the sixteenth century, and while some of us may have mourned the folly of our forbears, who in their day gave "short shrift" both to the obsessed and to the doubter, we must be willing, with a humble and a contrite heart, to sit again at the feet of a modern Gamaliel, and learn once more that there *are* more things in heaven and in earth than we ourselves wot of.

Summary of the Spiritualistic Theory of Life.—We have seen, according to the teachings of modern Spiritualists and others who assert the existence of "this new world," that that ghost-land "is complex and enormous, comprising an infinite number of beings of every grade, ranging from the sprite to the archangel."²⁵ Good and evil spirits of all descriptions live in the world beyond. Every being there apparently has the power to visit this material world of ours, in some cases coming to our call, at others forcing their unwelcome

²⁴ Hyslop, "Contact with the Other World," pp. 386, 406.

²⁵ Sir A. Conan Doyle in "An Amazing Séance," by Sydney A. Moseley, 1919, p. x.

presence upon earthly mortals, and terrifying them into another existence. Everything that lives, it would seem, has its double or spirit part. While still in the flesh, not only man himself, but horses, cats, dogs, and other animals, possess the faculty of separating their immaterial form from their material bodies; we have evidence unmistakable to prove it. Mr. Elliott O'Donnell, the celebrated ghost hunter, assures us that some friends of his possess a big tabby which is frequently seen in two places at the same time, the astral body, of course, being in one place and the fleshy body in another. This astral body travels everywhere, regardless of space or material obstacles; the least touch, and it vanishes; it will pass through brick walls just as easily as the soul of man does. Mr. O'Donnell has constantly seen the ghosts of all manner of birds in the parks in London and Dublin, Greenwich Park, in particular, being full of them. To say that animals have no future life is nothing but "a damned lie, damned bigotry,"²⁶ and "no amount of reasoning—religious or otherwise—has as yet annihilated the possibility of all forms of life possessing spirits." A puppy was killed by a street car; a day or two afterwards it walked in at the front door.²⁷

While we have on the one hand spiritists

²⁶ "Animal Ghosts," pp. vii, 103, 107, 135, 193-194, 287, 294.

²⁷ *Id.*, pp. 16, 26.

who attest the truth of Spiritualism by material manifestations—by squeaking dolls and tingling tambourines—others deny that such vulgar proceedings on the part of spiritual beings afford any real evidence of the continuance of life after death. Dr. Hyslop said, for example, that “there is no scientific excuse for the spiritualistic contention that physical phenomena prove the existence of spirits. Unaccompanied by mental phenomena they are useless.”²⁸ He insists that “neither telepathic coincidences, nor the movement of objects without physical contact, is in itself evidence of spirit agencies.”²⁹ But it must distinctly be remembered that it is upon the manœuvres of spirits in the dark that the great majority of Spiritualists to-day rely to prove that man really does survive death. As we have seen, there is no fundamental difference between this “new world,” with its “new religion” and “vital message,” and the world of ghosts, with its goblins and fairies, so implicitly believed in by the more uncultured members of civilised races, and which have been denounced as being mere vulgar errors and superstitions by the more enlightened representatives of those races. Fairyland was essentially a land of entities, which enjoyed a life of a spiritual nature, where every earthly thing had

²⁸ “Contact with the Other World,” p. 337.

²⁹ *Id.*, p. 6.

its counterpart, and life went on just as it did on earth. Spirit-land, so the modern Spiritualist tells us, is in every respect the spiritual double of life here, a land where "whiskies" and "smokes" are to be had for the mere asking, a land where little children still troop to school or play their games as hitherto. While a land of joy and mirth, it certainly is not a land of peace, for naughty spirits still exist; nor have the "wicked ceased from troubling."

If one, on the other hand, relies for proof of survival on modern miracles such as spirit photography, which is claimed, and triumphantly claimed, as absolute evidence that spirits do communicate with their earthly friends, we are met by the fact that other miracles just as remarkable and equally authenticated are claimed by highly cultured races, like the Chinese. Every student must be more or less familiar with the marvelous and unaccountable performances of Eastern magicians like those to which I have referred. Indeed, it is a question whether the conjurer of the East has not oftentimes eclipsed the "miracles" of the West, and reversed the power of the Egyptian enchanters, whose serpents were gobbled up by those of the Chosen Race.

But it is in the substitution of the old superstition, that demons are the cause of many diseases, that the most serious aspect of this new religion

presents itself. It might have been thought that this dangerous example of man's credulity had for ever been relegated to the past in all countries influenced by the teachings of modern medicine. Yet, after all, modern medicine must be wrong. For are we not assured by learned doctors that devils do, indeed, take possession of men? Have not miracle-workers like Father Ignatius cast forth demons at a word, and have not wicked ghosts ceased from plaguing the innocent by the recital of a prayer by a doctor of medicine as well as by a divine?

We must now turn our attention to spiritism as it exists among the barbaric and savage races of man before we are able to give a satisfactory answer to the great question which the Spiritualists have asked, "If a man die, shall he live again?" and which they, in the name of science, have answered in the affirmative.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITUALISTIC BELIEFS AMONG BARBARIC AND SAVAGE RACES

“ Nature ” and “ Supernature ” among Barbaric and Savage Races.—It is a remarkable fact that, while many of the most savage of our species occupy an exceedingly low plane as regards this world's goods, possessing in many instances no shelter except that afforded by the cavern, or by a few leaves propped up by means of sticks, whose sole protection from wild animals or human enemies is that afforded by a few pointed sticks, yet these very communities are in possession of a large number of religious beliefs and customs which are the common property of all members of the tribe, and not simply held and acted upon by a minority. It will be seen that the very tenets offered to us by the Spiritualist of to-day as a new religion not only have their place in the religious ceremonies and superstitious customs of savage races, but that they are also the foundation stone upon which every religion on *earth* has been built. To barbaric and savage man no such division exists between the *natural* and the *supernatural* as exists in the mind of civilised man himself. To the poor mis-

guided "heathen" there is no *duality* in Nature. To him, Nature is *one*, not *two*; there is nothing above or beyond, nothing *super-normal* or *supernatural*. Saturated as he is from early infancy in what *we* term the supernatural, he is entirely unconscious of any dividing line, such as has been created by his civilised brother, between "physics" and "spirits," between Nature and supernature. The supernatural, as we ourselves understand it, is an invention of civilised man, not of the savage, and, as has been the case with many of the former's inventions, it is one which has been used as much for his woe as for his weal. The manifestations brought to pass by unseen entities, in which all savage races believe and *act* upon, are therefore just as natural a part of the order of things as are the very stones upon which he treads unshod; and one of the many things that primitive races of man have bequeathed to their civilised descendants is that deep-seated and far-reaching belief which underlies the creed of the "new religion"—the belief in "spirits" and in ghosts, demons and devils, communication with the dead, and a life beyond the tomb.

"Shamans," the Spirit Doctors of Siberia.—The "miracles" performed among the primitive races of Siberia by their medicine-men, or shamans, frequently put in the shade those manifestations accomplished in the séances of civilised countries.

Not only can the Northern magician appear in two different places at the same time, and set himself free after being securely bound by cords, or successfully imitate all manner of sounds—human, super-human, animal—but he will swallow live hot coals, and plunge a knife deep into his stomach, yet suffer no hurt. As wise as his polished colleagues, he holds his séances in the dark; woe betide any of his audience who, of an inquiring mind, should foolishly attempt to touch any of the spirits that manifest themselves through his mediumship. Spirits are ever elusive, fond of the dark; they resent familiarity, and would kill any shaman, or thrust a knife into the ribs of a trespassing sitter, for taking liberties at such a time. But suspicion is sometimes justified; scepticism, after all, is not necessarily a proof of an extra dose of original sin. "There are many liars in our calling," declared a famous shaman. "One will lift up the skins of the sleeping-room with his right toe, and then assure you that it was done by 'spirits'; another will talk into the bosom of his shirt or through his sleeve, making the voice issue from a quite unusual place."¹

The Buriats.—The Buriats, a Mongolian race inhabiting the region of Lake Baikal, declare that

¹ See the evidence, collated chiefly from Russian sources, in "Aboriginal Siberia," by M. A. Czaplicka, Oxford, 1914. W. Bogoras, quoted p. 180.

when a man dies he finds it difficult to realise that he is really dead, and it takes three whole days in spirit-land to persuade him that dead he is. Future life is very similar to the present one; the spirits feast themselves and get married, and dress there according to the clothes in which they were buried. The soul separates from the body during sleep, and acquires new qualities in spirit-land; it can be killed. This is known as the second death.²

The Yakuts.—Among the Yakuts, another Siberian people, it was the custom to bury *alive* the old and infirm, *at their own request*,³ apparently on the ground that if they became too decrepit they would be totally unfit for life in another sphere.

The Spirit World in Southern India.—The lower the scale of civilisation, the greater in number will spirits and demons be found. Among the low-caste and forest tribes of India, we find a complicated world where good and bad spirits influence the lives of people on earth. All manner of practices are resorted to in order to prevent wicked ghosts, or demons that have never possessed a body of flesh, from tormenting the living. Sometimes the corpse is buried face downwards, or stones piled on its body, so that it shall be unable to rise from the dead. In other instances the thumbs and great toes are tied together, thus making it impossible for

² *Id.*, pp. 158-159.

³ *Id.*, p. 161.



FIG. 2.—AN EXORCIST OR DEVIL-DANCER OF SOUTH KANARA.

*From "Castes and Tribes of Southern India," by E. Thurston. Madras, 1909.
After a photograph in the possession of the Government of Madras.*

the ghost to get up again. Evil spirits enter the body by means of the natural openings, therefore a Brahman will snap his fingers when he gapes, in order to prevent them entering his stomach and feeding on the contents. As demons are the cause of all manner of disease, the patient is often flogged to force the devil to go. On one occasion a man said to be possessed had his face slapped by a disbelieving missionary, but the sufferer declared that the missionary's assault had frightened the devil away.⁴ These demons get up to all kinds of irritating pranks. They howl and shriek in the house, throw utensils and stones all over the place, fill pots and cooking vessels with dirt. Some years ago two high native officials were sitting in the verandah of a house, when, all of a sudden, ashes and earth came pouring from the roof. Seizing a gun, and firing it in the air to frighten the goblins away, the master of the house was assailed with stones and pebbles, flung by some invisible agency.⁵

Exorcism in Southern India has been made a fine art, its practice prevailing in all parts of the country. The "devil-dancer," grotesquely arrayed, endeavours to expel the evil one by dancing to the sound of the cymbal and the drum until he has worked himself into a state of frenzy; he twists

⁴ Rev. John Abbs, "Twenty-two Years' Missionary Experience in Travancore," 1870, p. 104.

⁵ M. J. Walhouse, F.R.A.S., "On the Belief in Bhutas," *Journ. Anth. Inst.* (1875), vol. v., pp. 408-422.

and turns himself about until thoroughly exhausted. Presently, from the pit of his stomach, a voice will be heard directing the course the patient must pursue in order to recover. (See Fig. 2.)

Spirits of the South Pacific.—In Melanesia the natives believe in spirits which have had no previous existence on earth, as well as in the existence of the human soul. The soul is like a man; it stays inside him, and only goes away for a time when he sleeps or faints. When a person is sick, prayers are offered to prevent the soul's departure. Animals and inanimate things also have souls. When a man dies, money, weapons, and other property are placed near the grave, so that he may have the use of their spirit parts in the other world. The ghost of the dead goes to spirit-land, where it meets its friends; if they do not want him, they drive him away, so that he has to return to life again. Spirits of the dead visit their friends on earth, and can be seen by them; they will also haunt houses and burial-places, frightening the people, who do all they can to drive them away. Those that practise cannibalism greatly fear the malign influence of the men they have killed; while the body is being cut up and cooked they close their mouths, and shut the doors of their houses to keep the dead man's ghost from entering. Drums are beaten, and the people shout in order to drive evil spirits



FIG. 3.—STICKS WORN IN THE SEPTUM OF THE NOSE BY NATIVES OF THE PAPUAN GULF.

From a photograph by Mrs. J. H. Holmes, by permission of the Rev. J. H. Holmes.

away. Life in the other world is very much like what it is on earth: very dismal and unsatisfactory to some, lovely and beautiful to others. Niggardly people are punished in spirit-land as they deserve; their buttocks are dashed against the roots of a chestnut-tree. To prevent the spirit of a dead man entering his mouth, a man will put something over it, and thus keep the spirit out.⁶ In British New Guinea, as well as other parts of the savage world, sticks are thrust through the septum of the nose, in order to prevent the ingress of spirits or exit of the soul (Fig. 3).

The natives of the Papuan Gulf say that when the spirits of dead warriors who have died fighting reach ghost-land, they still retain feelings of anger against their old enemies. They visit them at night, tickle their feet, and thus prevent them getting any sleep. In order to get rid of these troublesome spirits, after a fight every nook and corner of the village is fumigated with flaming fire-brands, drums are beaten, people shout, and thus endeavour to frighten the wicked spirits back to spirit-land, never to return again and annoy the living.⁷

Souls, Ghosts, and Spirits in Solomon Islands.—

As everywhere in the savage world, the natives of the Solomon Islands make a clear distinction be-

⁶ George Brown, D.D., "Melanesians and Polynesians," 1910, pp. 145, 190 fol.

⁷ Rev. J. Holmes, *Journ. Anth. Inst.*, 1902, vol. xxxii., p. 428.

tween the three distinct entities : of the spirit which animates the living man, or "soul"; the spirit of the departed, or "ghost"; and the pure "spirit," which has never possessed a covering of flesh. Men are able to send their souls into sharks or other animals, while their own bodies remain in a trance. Death itself is merely a migration, and affects the body, not the soul; it is the going of the soul out of the body. Even an unconscious person is said to be dead. Life in the other world is very similar to what it is on earth; as elsewhere, people are able to rise from the dead. Once a woman and her child died and were buried together. One day the children in the village were surprised to find the child had returned to play again with them, but in the evening disappeared, returning to the grave whence she had come. This happened on three separate occasions, so on the third day, as she was about to get into the grave, the children seized her. "Leave me alone," the child cried. "I must go to my mother; she is waiting for me below." She was told she spoke falsely. "If your mother is indeed waiting for you below, call her up." The child did call her mother, who arose from the grave forthwith, and together they returned to their village home, to prove to disbelievers that miracle is no monopoly of civilised lands.⁸

⁸ See a valuable paper on the "Beliefs and Tales of San Cristoval," by the Rev. C. E. Fox and (the late) F. H. Drew, *Journ. Royal Anth. Inst.* (1915), vol. xlv., pp. 131-228.

When a man is possessed, in order to know the will of the ghosts the clubs and spears that are piled against the posts of the house rattle and are violently agitated when the ghosts arrive, although no person is standing near them. The possessed will take live coal from the fire and eat it, and speak with a voice which differs entirely from his own. If the seer of spirits is unable to photograph these entities, he is at least able to give us an exact representation as to their appearance, one of which is reproduced, once more to show an unbelieving world how universal the unseen regions are. (See frontispiece.)⁹

Frightening Away or Killing Evil Spirits.—All primitive races go in mortal dread of the ghosts of those who have been killed in battle, or who have otherwise died violent deaths. Extraordinary precautions are therefore taken, not only to get on good terms with the ghost, but also to prevent the disembodied soul from taking revenge upon the living for wrongs that may have been done while it was still in the flesh. In New Guinea, for example, the warriors hurry from the field of battle in order to reach their homes before nightfall, followed by the ghosts of the slain, who desire to recover a portion of their souls which adheres to the spears of the slayers. The returning warriors therefore hide their blood-stained weapons in the

⁹ *Id.*, p. 176.

forest, where it is believed the souls of the dead are unable to find them, and then, wearied with a fruitless search, they have to return back to their own dead bodies.¹⁰ In some parts of New Guinea it is the custom to decorate the walls with the jaw-bones of persons put to death; otherwise the ghosts would pay the people a visit during the night, and knock, sob, and groan, and thus prevent them getting any sleep.¹¹ In order to scare away avenging demons the natives of the Nicobar Islands erect hideous wooden objects on their dwellings (Fig. 4), just as similar precautions were taken in Scotland and elsewhere to keep fairies away by placing a piece of iron over the door. Savages believe that if a man loses a limb in this world, he will be minus that limb when he arrives in spirit-land; hence they are willing to undergo any amount of suffering rather than risk their future. But the living must be protected from undue attentions of wandering ghosts, so the black fellows of Australia fill the dead man's chest and stomach with stones and break his legs as well, so that he cannot get up and roam about at night.¹² Uncivilised man believes in a second death—the

¹⁰ Sir J. G. Frazer, "Psyche's Task," 2nd ed., 1913, pp. 124-125.

¹¹ J. G. Frazer, quoting Father Baudin, "Taboo," 1911, p. 171.

¹² A. W. Howitt, "Native Tribes of South-East Australia," 1904, p. 474.

death of the soul or ghost. In Uganda, when a man had been executed, his body was cut into little pieces; as this had a like effect on his soul, it was considered impossible for him to do any harm to those on earth. Sometimes, in order to kill his soul as well as his body, he was made to drink a magical draught, consisting of beer mixed with certain medicines, which was administered from a special pot known as the "slaughter pot" (Fig. 5).

"Soul-Catchers."—Professional "soul-catchers" are employed in Borneo to prevent a man's soul leaving his body for good. The soul-catcher falls into a trance, and sends his own soul to overtake that of his patient, which is supposed to be on the way to the abode of departed souls, and endeavours to persuade it to return.¹³

A "Red Indian" Séance.—It has been suggested by modern Sadducees that the Spiritualism of to-day came from America through the North American Indian. Whether this be true or no, the séance, as held by the original inhabitants of the New World, bears a remarkable likeness to those conducted by Spiritualists in England as well as in the United States. As far back as the sixteenth century Father Acosta spoke of the wonderful powers of Mexican magicians, who were able to fly through the air, assume any form they pleased.

¹³ Charles Hose, D.Sc., and William McDougall, M.B., F.R.S.
 "The Pagan Tribes of Borneo," 1912, vol. ii., p. 29.

and who possessed telepathic knowledge of events occurring at distant places. Chippewa sorcerers handled red-hot stones and burning brands with impunity, and bathed their hands in boiling water unscathed.¹⁴ To-day the supernatural power of their jugglers is proved by performances in which they set themselves free from the tightest cords, cause the lodge to sway as though blown by a tempest, and summon the spirits of wild animals to prove their presence by making their voices heard by the spectators. An eyewitness states that poles were sunk into the ground, bound together by hoops. The sorcerer was bound, his hands tied behind his back, his feet were also tied, a large stone placed on his chest, and he was bound around so that he appeared like a ball. Four men carried him and threw him inside the enclosure formed by the poles. One of these men then called to the spirits: "Come, ye people of the sky; come and smoke." Then, in a few minutes, the poles shook, the structure rocked and swayed as though a tornado was blowing; yet there was no wind, and the sky remained cloudless. Soon a voice was heard crying: "Who is tying up my grandchild? I am going to break these ropes and throw them over where you are sitting." In a few moments the spectators saw the ropes fly through

¹⁴ "Handbook of American Indians," Bulletin 30, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, art. "Magic."



FIG. 4.—A WOODEN IMAGE ERECTED BY THE
NICOBAR ISLANDERS TO SCARE AWAY EVIL SPIRITS.

*From the original in the British Museum, by permission
of the Trustees.*

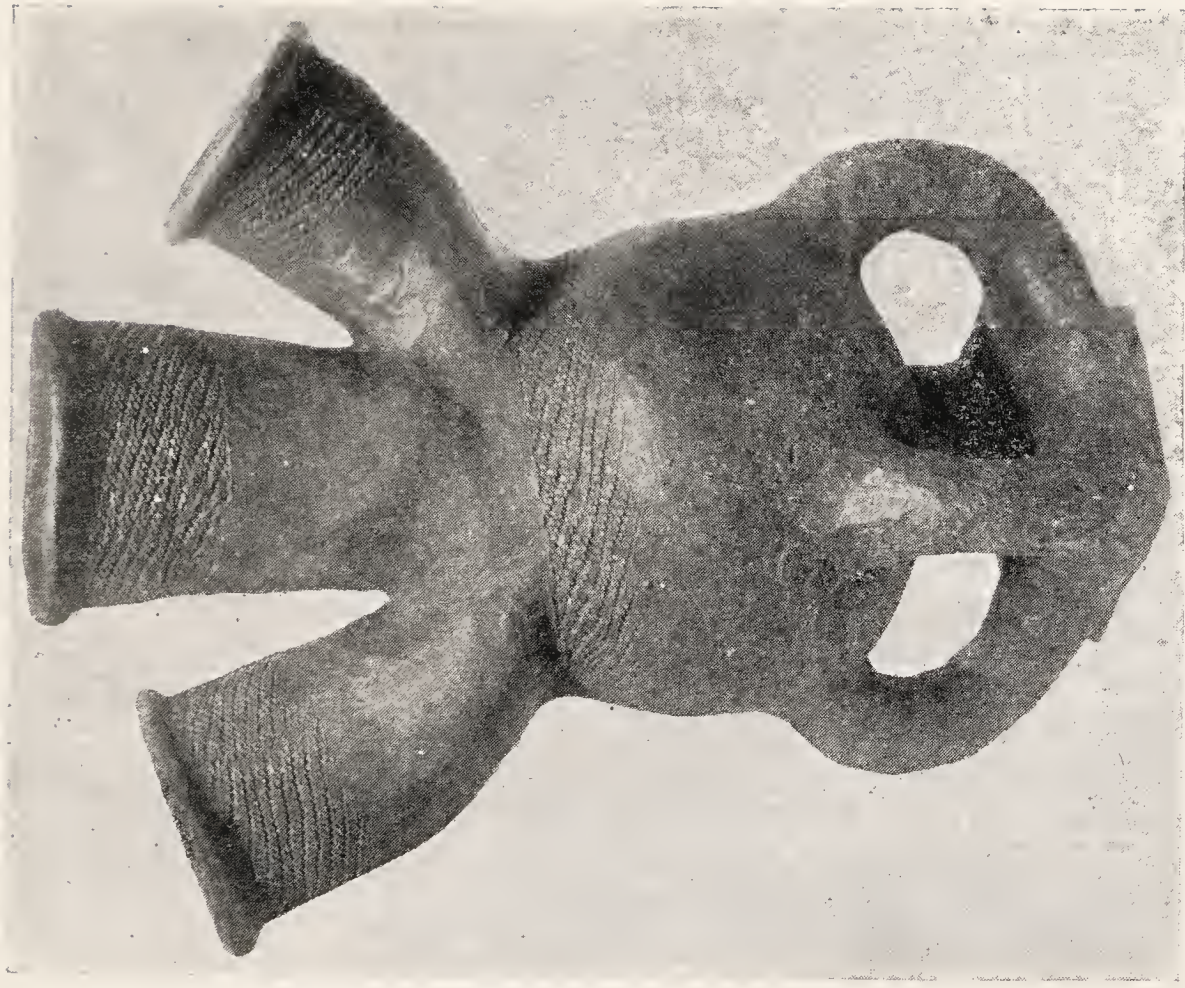


FIG. 5.—SLAUGHTER POT, USED IN UGANDA,
FOR KILLING SOULS.

*From the original in the British Museum, by permission of the
Trustees.*

the air; they were, indeed, the very ropes which had bound the juggler, and he himself was free.¹⁵

A Trip to Ghost-Land.—A story is related by the Tlingit Indians, Alaska, of a young man who lost his wife soon after they were married. For two nights he was unable to sleep; as soon as she was buried he made up his mind to go for a walk. He walked all that day and the next night, till he came to a very large valley; there he heard voices, as though they were a long way off. Presently he came to a lake, on the other side of which he discerned houses and people. All the while he had been walking in the road of death. Whispering to the people, who said amongst themselves that someone had come up from dreamland, a messenger was sent to fetch him over. As soon as he got there, to his great joy, he found his wife, who had been crying. The people invited him to sit down in a house and rest, and he was invited to eat; but his wife said: "Don't eat. If you eat you will never get back." So he did not eat. Then his wife said: "You had better not stay here long. Let us go right away." So they went back together, crossing the lake in a "ghost-canoe." On the second night they arrived home, and the man went in and said to his father: "I have brought my wife back." "Well," said his father, "why

¹⁵ Frances Densmore, "Chippewa Music," Bulletin 45, Bureau American Ethnology, Washington, 1910, p. 123.

don't you bring her in?" When the young man had fetched his wife, the people in the house saw him only, but a deep shadow appeared to follow him. Wherever the man went this shadow followed. During the daytime the woman was very quiet, but all night long the two could be heard playing together, and the people could hear her voice. But there was a friend of the girl who loved her before she died, and he was jealous when he found her husband had brought her back. So the lover hid himself one night at the head of the bed, and overheard the wife tell her husband that she would show herself as she was before, and not remain a permanent shadow. Then they played together again, and the listener thought he would raise the curtain and look; but the very moment he did so the people in the house heard a rattling of bones, for that instant the woman's husband died, and the ghosts of them both went back to ghost-land.¹⁶

A South American Wizard.—Mr. E. F. im Thurn (now Sir Everard im Thurn, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., C.B.), when living with Macusi Indians, and suffering from headache and fever, had a most remarkable experience with a medicine-man, who offered to cure him. Soon after dark he slung his hammock

¹⁶ John R. Swanton, "Tlingit Myths and Texts," Bulletin 39, Bureau American Ethnology, Washington, 1909, pp. 249-250.



FIG. 6.—A WITCH-DOCTOR AND ATTENDANTS.

In the Upper Congo (Upoto).

Photo by the Rev. W. L. Forfeitt.

Reproduced by permission from a photograph in the possession of the Baptist Missionary Society, London.

in the house where the medicine-man was living; the entrance was closed, and all was quite dark inside. The medicine-man had provided himself with several bunches of green boughs cut from the bushes on the savannah. Besides the medicine-man and himself, there were about thirty people in the house, attracted by the novelty of a white man being treated by their own doctor. The patient was warned that he must on no account put his feet on the ground, as the spirits would be on the floor, and dreadful things would happen if they caught him. At last, after a pause, because the wizard appeared shy of working in the presence of the white man, and after exacting a promise that he would not lay hands on anything that might touch him, the ceremony began. For a moment all was still; then, suddenly, silence was broken by terrible yells, and roars, and shouts, which filled the house, shaking walls and roof, sometimes rising to a roar, then sinking to a low growl, which never ceased for six hours. Questions and answers were thundered out without the slightest pause; the medicine-man was questioning the spirits, and they in their turn were shouting back the answers. Now and again, through this mad din, there was a sound, low and indistinct at first, which gathered in volume, as if some big winged thing had come from afar toward the house, passed through the roof, and then settled heavily on the floor. Then

this same winged thing rose and passed out as it had come; others came and went, and the air, as if displaced by their wings, was driven over the patient's face. They were the spirits coming and going. As each came, yells heard indistinctly as from afar grew louder and louder as each spirit alighted on the floor. The first thing each did was to lap up some tobacco-water which had been placed on the floor; but while each spirit lapped, the medicine-man kept shouting, until the spirit was ready to answer. When each spirit had given an account of itself, and had promised not to trouble the patient, it flew away. These spirits came in the form of tigers and deer, monkeys and birds, turtles and snakes, and of Ackawoi and Arecuna Indians. Their voices, slightly different in tone, were supposed to be appropriate to their different forms, but all were hoarse.

Now for the sceptic's explanation and comment. The traveller declares that it was a clever piece of ventriloquism and acting; the whole long terrific noise came from the throat of the wizard; the marvel was that such a strain could be endured for six long hours. The rustling of the spirits' wings, and the thuds made as they alighted, were made by shaking the leafy boughs and then dashing them against the ground, these boughs also producing the breezes felt by the patient. Once the boughs touched his face, and, like many another

doubter, he seized and held some of the leaves with his teeth. Towards the end of the performance, and as he was losing consciousness, a hand seemed to be laid upon his face. Mr. im Thurn says the effect of all this was very strange; before long he passed into a kind of stupor, akin to mesmeric trance. Incapable of voluntary motion, he seemed to be suspended somewhere in a ceaselessly surging din, his only thoughts being as to the cause of the noise, and an effort to remember if there had been a time before noise was. Now and then, when the noise had nearly died away, during the intervals in which the medicine-man was supposed to have passed out through the roof, and to be heard from a distance, the patient woke to semi-consciousness, only once more to sink into a state of stupor as the noise grew again. At last, toward morning, the noise having ended, he awoke thoroughly, and rushed out on to the open savannah anything but cured of his headache, but the wizard nevertheless insisting that cured he must be, and, medium-like, demanding payment.

The author describes his condition as that experienced by most men, in which man lies between sleeping and waking, conscious and able to think rationally, yet either wholly unconscious of the existence of the body, or, if conscious of it, quite unable to produce any effect on it by volition. It now seems to him as if his soul was then as nearly

separated from his body as is possible under any other circumstances short of death, and that the efforts of the medicine-man were partly directed to the separation of his own spirit from his body, and partly to the separation of the spirit from the body of his patient, in this way spirit holding communion with spirit.¹⁷

Spiritism among the Indians of Guiana.—The wild races of Guiana hold that all objects have two separable parts—a body and a spirit—and that certain individuals can, of their own free will, separate the one from the other. They are separable in death, as in sleep. The medicine-man can call and question the soul of any sleeping Indian far away from his own tribe, and he can despatch his own spirit to get the required information, his own body remaining present. Disembodied spirits are like the beings still in the flesh which they see around them. Spirits are able to enter the bodies of enemies and cause headaches and disease, the pains in the flesh being due to a foreign body, which is the materialised form of a hostile spirit, and not simply a natural body. How remarkably vivid are the dreams of these natural races is well illustrated by the following incident which happened to the author during his travels among these Indians: A young Macusi accused him of making him haul

¹⁷ E. F. im Thurn, "Among the Indians of Guiana," 1883, pp. 335-338.

the canoe up a series of difficult cataracts during the night, while his body was asleep, and he refused to believe the traveller's explanation that it was only a dream.¹⁸

And the Malagasy.—The natives of Madagascar say that the soul will continue in spirit-land the life it led in the body on earth; a poor man here will be a poor spirit there, and a rich man here will be a rich one there. The ghosts of the dead appear from time to time, and visit their friends on earth.¹⁹

The Spirit World in Africa.—The spirit doctors of the "dark continent," the wizards and magicians, who are believed to be in league with the world of spirits, and who sway not only the people, but their chiefs as well, are familiar figures to most of us. The African doctor, like his colleagues in all parts of the world, declares that he owes his power to "supernatural" influences, and that by the exercise of that power he is able to cast out devils from human beings, and send them into the bodies of crocodiles or other animals. If a wicked ghost from another clan—wicked ghosts are often sent by a member of another clan to plague an enemy—disturbs the peace, then the doctor will capture and remove the intruder by placing it in a pot, and

¹⁸ *Id.*, pp. 329, 333, 339, 344-345, 348-349, 358.

¹⁹ Archdeacon E. O. McMahon, "Christian Missions in Madagascar," 1914, pp. 52-53.

destroy it by fire or by water.²⁰ He causes the rain to fall, as well as the wicked to tremble. Should the white man deride his power and declare that he owes it to the devil, he can triumphantly point to facts which even the white man himself is unable to set aside. A woman in Gabun became very anxious about her brother, who was trading some three hundred miles away, and from whom no news could be obtained. She consulted a magician, who told her that her brother had died quite recently. "I see his body lying bleeding." He described the wounds, the locality, the time, as well as other details of a country to which he had never been. We are assured by the missionary who records the story that two months later news did come, and that it agreed in time, place, and circumstances with the doctor's foretelling.²¹ The wonderful and mysterious things that these magicians do and tell equal those of civilised lands; it would be no difficult matter to give a great number of instances in which savage superstitions have coincided with actual facts. David Leslie met a Kaffir lady-doctor, who, from ankle to calf, was wrapped round with the entrails of a cow filled with blood and fat. She wore a petticoat of hide embroidered with the teeth of lions and tigers,

²⁰ Rev. John Roscoe, M.A., "The Northern Bantu," Cambridge, 1915, p. 136.

²¹ Rev. R. H. Nassau, M.D., "Fetichism in West Africa," New York (1904), pp. 134-135.

snakes' bones, and beads. Around her loins another mass of entrails were girded; her body was tattooed all over, and smeared with red and black earth. Chaffed about her supernatural power, she declared to the mocker that she would soon give him proof, and foretold he would go out of the country without one companion or a single hoof of cattle: he left "the country without a companion or a hoof of cattle." Leslie then proceeded to the Zulu country to meet his Kaffir elephant-hunters, and, not succeeding, was advised by his servant to consult a native doctor. Eight fires were made by a diviner, corresponding to the number of the missing hunters, and into each fire the doctor cast some roots and a stone, calling out as he did so the name of the hunter to which the fire had been dedicated. After eating some medicine he fell into a trance, awakening from which he raked the fire, examined the stone it contained, and described not only the man correctly, but what had happened to each one. Leslie found that, "to his utter amazement," it turned out to be *true in every particular*.²²

Here, as elsewhere, captious cavillers may charge these medicine men and women with using spiritual beliefs to gain material ends; but while it is true that the worthy doctors are usually the best

²² "Among the Zulus and Amatongas," edited by the Hon. W. H. Drummond, 2nd ed., 1875, pp. 51-57.

dressed of the tribe (see Fig. 6), there can be no question that they do in all sincerity believe in their magical powers, while they, at the same time, willingly accept their fee.

Like all other uncivilised races, the natives of Africa believe they are able to communicate with the spirit world, either in their dreams, or through the medium of a second person during a trance. A missionary heard a lad praying earnestly one evening that his soul might return to him the following day; it left him while asleep, and he was afraid it might take upon itself to leave him altogether.²³

Thus, as we have seen, there is an unmistakable identity between the notions of all uncultivated races and those put forward in recent years by the advocates of "Spiritualism." The Australian black fellow, who represented the most primitive of human races, and who told Howitt that he was able to go up to the sky and see his father and mother, because his *yambo*, or spirit, could leave his body during sleep, as well as his fellow black, who explained that when he went to sleep he was able to go to distant places and see distant people, even to see and commune with those who are dead,²⁴ is on exactly the same psychological plane as the white

²³ Henri A. Junod, "The Life of a South African Tribe," Neuchâtel, 1913, vol. ii., p. 340.

²⁴ A. W. Howitt, D.Sc., "The Native Tribes of South-East Australia," 1904, p. 436.

man who claims—not only in the name of religion, but in the name of science as well—that such explanation is the sole explanation of the world in which we live. But it is not the place of either claimant to interpret the universe in terms of the most primitive of human conceptions, and to demand that such interpretation be accepted by thinking men, unless we are to discard and to abandon every advance in, and addition that has been made to, science during the last fifty years. As the biologist and the astronomer of to-day would repudiate primitive explanations of their respective sciences, and declare those explanations to be untrue explanations of “natural” phenomena, although they themselves may share with the savage other primordial conceptions; so would the anthropologist, whose business it is to study the complex psychology of man, refuse to accept any explanation put forth in the name of science which, on examination, proved contradictory of facts as well attested as those upon which modern biology and astronomy themselves are founded. I have pointed out that the truth or falsehood of this modern Spiritualism is a question for the anthropologist to decide; it is, therefore, upon such data as have been placed before the reader that I invite his attention to the conclusions in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

SPIRITUALISM AS A NEW RELIGION AND A NEW SCIENCE

Two Aspects—One for the Christian, the Other for the Scientist.—Before I proceed to deal with the evidence which has been placed before the reader, I wish once again to emphasise the fact that we are solely concerned with the question of Spiritualism in its scientific aspect, and not as a religious dogma recently added to Christian polemics. Nevertheless, the views which in recent years have found so many advocates—distinguished and otherwise—need not only the calm consideration of scientific men, but of all those “who profess and call themselves Christians.” For not only are we told that a “new science” is given us, but a “new religion” also, which is to take the place of a fossilised Christianity. There are many important questions of a religious character, which great minds of all ages have attempted to solve, but to which no answer of a scientific nature can be given, and which may ever remain *questions* so far as science itself is concerned. The *origin* and *destiny* of this vast universe, the *significance*

of life, the very *meaning* of things—all these are problems which scientific men have attempted to solve, only to return to the starting-point, furnished with hypotheses, it is true, but with no reply that would stand scientific gun-fire. To the man of science, the whole universe is shrouded in impenetrable mystery—a mystery which deepens the farther we go. Problems to which the Christian himself has found a satisfactory answer, to the scientific man remain problems still, and it is probable their solution is beyond scientific ken. With religion it is otherwise. All religions are, of necessity, founded upon dogma. The conception of Deity, the life everlasting, are propositions which rest on dogma alone. These propositions may be perfectly true, they *may* indeed offer an accurate explanation of the *reason* of things, but they are propositions which Science, in the present state of knowledge, is unable to accept, although she has no alternative explanation to give. It does not follow that the fundamentals of any of the great religions are erroneous; what does follow is that they do not lend themselves to scientific treatment. Nor does it follow that science is necessarily atheistic: to use a paradox, it is rather non-theistic. Atheism itself affords no solution of life; therefore, it can have no place in the workshops of science, nor receive any countenance from scientific men.

Spiritualism is Atheistic.—The Spiritualism of to-day, as expounded by its teachers, attempts an explanation of Nature which we are asked to accept in the name of science, as well as in that of religion. It must be pointed out, however, that modern Spiritualism is essentially atheistic, and on that count alone falls outside all the great religions except Buddhism. Alfred Russel Wallace himself declared that while the spirits say they commune with higher intelligences than themselves, *they know no more of God than we do!*¹ One would have thought that, *if* spirits really had any knowledge worth revealing, they would at least know *something* more than ordinary mortals of the Ruler to whose spiritual realms they have gone. But we can search spiritualistic literature for a knowledge of God and of Christ, and, except for a few references which in another age would have been deemed little short of blasphemous, our search will be in vain. The answers that the ghosts do give when questioned are as delightfully evasive as those of the savage medicine-man to his sceptical inquirer who has not been satisfied with the Delphic responses. Therefore it follows that while this new religion may give us “the best, the highest, the most rational, and most acceptable ideas of a future life,”² it gives us nothing at all concerning the being

¹ “On Miracles and Modern Spiritualism,” 1875, p. 116.

² *Id.*, p. 89.

of God Himself. Consequently its claim to be a "new religion," a religion which is to replace the old, is one of those arrogant and unfounded pretensions so frequently put forward in the name of religion.

Spiritualism and Christianity as a Missionary Religion.—While dealing with the Christian aspect of our subject, there is another most important point to which I must direct attention. If the contention of the Spiritualist be true—that there exists a world of disembodied spirits with whom we on earth are able to communicate—then it follows that the same beliefs so tenaciously held by the "heathen" must also be true. What grounds, therefore, have the Christian nations of Europe and America for expending vast sums of money in order to destroy those "pagan" beliefs in goblins and devils, and in ghosts that once possessed bodies and spirits that never lived in flesh, when those very beliefs have the sanction and are endorsed by "many of the greatest intellects which the world has produced in our time"?³ Little children are asked in their Sunday-schools to give their pence in order to provide Bibles in the native tongue for all races under heaven. Yet the Spiritualist who gives his "vital message" to the world declares that the Old Testament is a

³ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

document which has lost all validity, and should no longer be allowed to influence human conduct.⁴

Spiritualists and the Bible.—The Bible, he tells us, has no connection with modern conceptions of religion, the Old Testament being a document which advocates massacre, condones polygamy, accepts slavery, and orders the burning of so-called witches. Every hard-hearted brute in history has found his inspiration in the Old Testament. As for theologians, they have ever been a curse to the world.⁵ Could an avowed, irresponsible atheist indulge in a more sweeping generalisation than this?

Huxley and the Bible.—No man in his day was more energetically abused by many of “those who profess and call themselves Christians” than Thomas Henry Huxley. Yet it was that great agnostic who said, on the whole, he was in favour of reading the Bible, and who supported W. H. Smith’s motion that it be read in the Board Schools. At the first “Huxley Memorial Lecture” in honour of the greatest intellectual fighter that the nineteenth century produced, his friend the late Lord Avebury quoted with admiration that eulogy of the Bible by Huxley, printed thirty years before in the *Contemporary Review*: “Take the Bible as a whole; make the severest deductions which fair criticism can dictate for shortcomings and positive

⁴ Doyle, “The Vital Message” (1919), p. 36.

⁵ *Id.*, pp. 22-24, 31-32.

errors; eliminate, as a sensible lay-teacher would do, if left to himself, all that it is not desirable for children to occupy themselves with; and there still remains in this old literature a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur. And then consider the great historical fact that, for three centuries, this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history; that it has become the national epic of Britain, and is as familiar to noble and simple, from John-o'-Groat's House to Land's End, as Dante and Tasso once were to the Italians; that it is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of mere literary form; and, finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilisations, and of a great past stretching back to the farthest limits of the oldest nations in the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanised and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary space in the interval between two eternities, and earns the blessings or the curses of all time, according to its effort to do good and hate evil, even as they also are earning their payment for their work?"⁶

Those words were quoted before a great gathering

⁶ "Nature," vol. lxiii., p. 96; also Huxley, "Science and Education," 1893, pp. 397-398.

of scientific men, many of them, indeed, " the greatest intellects which the world has produced in our time "; and I question whether anyone in that vast audience, representing all branches of science, dissented from the noble lord's panegyric of his dead friend. It might be a good thing if some of the messages the spirits send us were couched in those beauties of mere literary form to which Huxley referred, and contained a little of the moral beauty and grandeur of that old Book which modern prophets wish to burn !

Spiritual Pastors—To-day and Yesterday.—

Whether the modern spirit doctor, who apparently is to take the place of the theologian of old, will be wiser in his generation than his forerunners remains to be seen. But here, again, one is led to question the accuracy of a charge against the Roman and Anglican clergy, which savours more of John Foxe and the sixteenth century than of James Gairdner of the twentieth. No body of men came under public suspicion and condemnation more than the French clergy during and prior to the great Revolution of 1789. Yet I doubt whether there is any responsible historian who would support and prove a charge that the theologians of that day were " a curse " to their country, unless that " curse " consisted in practising the precepts of the Book which should no longer be allowed to influence human conduct.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Alexis de Tocqueville, one of the most brilliant Frenchmen since the Revolution, declared that "in the sphere of politics properly so called, the clergy proclaimed louder than any class that the nation had an indefeasible and inalienable right to assemble and enact laws and to vote taxes." Summing up his critical investigations as to the conditions that prevailed in France before the great catastrophe which finally overwhelmed it, he said: "Upon the whole, and notwithstanding the notorious vices of some of its members, I question if there existed in the world a clergy more remarkable than the Catholic clergy of France at the moment when it was overtaken by the Revolution—a clergy more enlightened, more national, less circumscribed within the bounds of private duty, and more alive to public obligations, and, at the same time, more zealous for the faith: persecution proved it. I entered on the study of these forgotten institutions full of prejudices against the clergy of that day: I conclude that study full of respect for them."⁷ Taine, one of the most painstaking of historians, examined a mass of contemporary evidence belonging to the last thirty years of the Ancient Régime, and found that in a society built upon conquest

⁷ "The State of Society in France before the Revolution of 1789," 3rd ed., 1888, translated by Henry Reeve, D.C.L., p. 99.

it was the clergy who preached loving resignation in the hands of a heavenly Father; inspired gentleness, humility, patience, self-abnegation, and charity; "and this is religion." They relieved the poor, supported them in famine; in a word, they were "fathers" indeed to their flock.⁸ In his work on "The Revolution," Taine declared that his own judgment, based upon the study of texts, coincides with that of de Tocqueville—that the clergy deserve all praise before the Revolution. "If we keep human weakness in mind, it may be said that nobleness of character in the clergy corresponded with nobleness of profession; in all points no one could dispute their capacity for self-sacrifice, for they willingly suffered for what they believed to be the truth."⁹

If, as we are assured, the greatest reinforcement of morality which the human race has ever known is to come from this "new psychic religion,"¹⁰ let us hope it will include a love of truth for its own sake. Ghosts, as we have found, are not always truthful, and it may be for this reason that their followers on earth are led to indulge in wild and reckless statements respecting those who lived and

⁸ "The Ancient Régime," 1876, translated by John Durand, pp. 2, 35.

⁹ "The Revolution," 2nd ed., 1878-85, translated by John Durand, vol. iii., pp. 313-314, 317.

¹⁰ Doyle, "The Vital Message," pp. 33, 37.

suffered in days ago. May the ghosts inspire their friends with a desire to study the past, so that no sweeping denouncements be made unless supported by overwhelming proof. Judgments must be based upon evidence, not on prejudice.

The "New Science."—Let us now turn to the consideration of the data on which we are assured the new science is to be established.

If we examine the causes of natural events which happen among all races, civilised and barbaric, we shall find that "superstitious" reasons are invariably assigned to explain why they occur. It is only as exact knowledge advances that the real causes behind natural phenomena are discovered; therefore, we are justified in rejecting any given explanation if that explanation appears inadequate in the light of other experience. If, for example, a highly civilised race like the Chinese assures us that an eclipse is caused by a dragon swallowing the moon, we refuse to accept such an interpretation of Nature's ways, because we are satisfied that the astronomical explanation is the more reasonable one, although we ourselves may not be in a position to vouch for its scientific accuracy. Again, when a lady in great distress assures us that a Church Congress is being held inside her, and is causing severe pain, we reject her own diagnosis, not only because it is not the rule for Church Congresses to select ladies' bodies as their meeting-places, but

because the doctor assures us that the patient is suffering from peritonitis.¹¹

If it were possible for the mere coincidence of fact with the superstitious explanation to be the only solution of the events of life, then it would be a very easy matter to adduce a large number of instances to prove that the spiritual conception of Nature is the true one. Most races have a great regard for certain places held sacred by them, and believe that any violation of that sanctity would entail disaster; and they are justified in that belief by the fact that trouble has continually followed such violation. In Japan, the native guides who were accompanying a party of white men refused to approach a certain place for fear calamity might follow. They were laughed at by their white companions, and, in consequence, submitted to the outrage of their religious feelings, but the objection to break taboo was justified by one of the white men being taken ill.¹² When visiting the Todas, Dr. W. H. R. Rivers tells us that his guide was taken ill, and declared that his illness was due to the anger of the local gods, because he had shown certain features of the land to Dr. Rivers.¹³ In 1870 an Australian gin was killed by her husband, because at a certain

¹¹ Case quoted from Dagonet, "Traite des maladies mentales." E. Parish, "Hallucinations," p. 2.

¹² S. L. Gulick, M.A., D.D., "The White Peril in the Far East," n.d. (1905), New York, p. 16.

¹³ Rivers, "The Todas," 1906, pp. 308-309.

prohibited period she slept in his blanket, and he knew that in consequence of her act he would die. Within two weeks that man did die; the verdict of his black fellows undoubtedly would be that his death was brought about by his wife having slept in his blanket on a certain occasion; but should we ourselves be justified in drawing the same conclusion?¹⁴ To take another instance, this time from Fiji. Some fishermen set their nets without making an offering to their god, and returned home without catching a single turtle. On the next occasion they propitiated their god and returned successfully with a turtle, and this they did for five days in succession, a proof, decisive to their minds, of the power of their god. A missionary, not to be outdone, urged the supreme right of Jehovah before the head fisherman and the priest. Greatly excited, the chief said: "Our gods give us turtle, but we do not know that Jehovah gives us anything." Next day the Christian fishermen spread their nets and caught three turtles, which they presented to the Christian chief, who sent two of them to his "heathen brother." The missionary who narrates the story assures us that the arguments of all the divines in the world would not convince the heathen so effectually as this occurrence.¹⁵ The heathen, it is true, might be silenced

¹⁴ *Journ. Anth. Inst.*, vol. ix., p. 459. Captain W. E. Armit.

¹⁵ Thomas Williams, "Fiji and the Fijians," n.d. (1884) p. 532.

into admitting the power of the Hebrew God, but would such evidence satisfy a British judge, any more than the worthy missionary himself was satisfied as to the power of the local god, whom the "heathen" propitiated, and who were rewarded on five days in succession? Are we more satisfied with the missionary's proof, and is that proof entitled to more serious consideration than the evidence of the heathen as to the power of their own deity? Therefore, we are forced to the conclusion that the coincidence of certain events, with their supposed "supernatural" cause, by no means proves the truth of that supernormal explanation. We must bear these facts in mind when we compare the Spiritualism of the savage with that of civilised man.

Primitive Conceptions of Nature.—We have seen that, according to the conceptions of the most uncivilised races, spirit-land is inhabited by distinct classes of spirits which may be classified as follows:

1. Permanent disembodied spirits or souls of the dead.
2. Temporary spirits represented by the souls of living men.
3. Spirits from other worlds.
4. Spirits existing in all natural objects, whether animate or inanimate.

All these spirits are either good or bad, and are capable of exerting a powerful influence on earthly

mortals. The soul part of man is frequently pictured as the body, in miniature, and leaves it during sleep for a time, or for ever after death. When a man dies, the ghost lingers near the body for a time, either in the woods, near the house, or in the lodge itself. Animals, like everything else, have souls. Certain men, as, for instance, medicine-men, are able voluntarily to disembody their own spirit and visit places or people. Savages do not possess any conception of a Supreme Deity, nor of a great and powerful spirit of evil, corresponding to the Devil. It is possible for a disembodied soul to exist for a time in the body of an animal or in that of another human being.¹⁶

Identity of the Savage's Conception with that of the Modern Spiritualist.—Therefore, we find that no difference exists between the savage's idea of a spirit world and that entertained by modern Spiritualists. In both cases spirit-land is not far away, as the Christian conceives Heaven and Hell to be, but near by, in, and surrounding, the present material world. And in that land of ghosts everything goes on just as it does in the world of flesh. Ghosts quarrel and fight, love and hate, smoke and kiss, and do those things they ought not to do, as if they were on earth and not in a heavenly sphere. It is not every mortal that is

¹⁶ See Captain T. Whiffen, F.R.G.S., F.R.A.I., "The North-West Amazons," 1915, pp. 219-230.

privileged to possess the power of seeing these spiritual beings; therefore, intermediaries are necessary to enable embodied spirits to communicate with their disembodied friends. As we have seen, everything in ghost-land is an ethereal duplicate of the particular state of material existence to which the spirits have been used on earth. The classification of the inhabitants of spirit-land into four groups by uncivilised races applies equally to that of the most advanced representatives of genus *homo*. But I think it would be a difficult task to find, in the great number of accounts which we now possess depicting savage life in the world to come, anything approaching that welter of degradation and moral turpitude in which our own ghosts wallow in the "better land" of Spiritualism. You may search the records giving descriptions of the life beyond, which the most "degraded" savages entertain, and nothing equalling that of cultured Spiritualists in sheer vulgarity could possibly be discovered. For "over there," where "a lot of the stuff parsons tell on earth turns out to be untrue," men still "want a drink damned badly," and rush to illicit drinking clubs, where women "ogle our men," and the whisky and soda does "not taste quite right." Being dead is considered a "darned sight better than being alive." We are told, in one of the most recent revelations vouchsafed to us of the only "rational account of

life beyond the grave," that Britons still fight Boches, and wonder why they are not able to give them the *coup de grâce* as they did on earth. An English officer seizes a German by the throat, shouting as he does so: "Why the devil don't you die? I've shot you dead three times!" Another warrior plunges his bayonet into a German's stomach. The German, falling to the ground, jumps up again and plunges his own bayonet into "our man's chest." "Damn it!" exclaims the surprised Englishman: "the Hun's been killed twice."¹⁷ It follows, therefore, that the conception of the spiritual state entertained by the Spiritualists of the most advanced races is a far more degraded one than that held by the lowest savages.

Spiritualists believe in the scientific doctrine of evolution, but, as we have seen, many converts to this new psychic religion not only repudiate ecclesiastical dogmas, and deny the story of a fall from a state of purity, but believe neither the existence of an omnipotent God nor the Atonement of Jesus Christ.¹⁸ One fervent advocate of the occult, whose researches in ghost-land are well known to most of us, declares that the laws and

¹⁷ J. S. M. Ward, B.A., F.R.Econ.S., F.R.S.S. (late Scholar and Prizeman of Trinity Hall, Cambridge), "A Subaltern in Spirit-Land," 1920, pp. ix, 33, 66, 168, 190, 203, 204, 229, 238, 240.

¹⁸ Henslow, "Religion of the Spirit World," pp. 7, 16, 50-51. Doyle, "The New Revelation," pp. 51, 70, 72.

principles of Nature are certainly more suggestive of a "fiendish than a benevolent author." Insects, trees, and fish are inflicted with diseases, for which "the creator of Nature is alone responsible."¹⁹ Christ Himself, it appears, was a wonder-worker; or, as the Rev. Professor Henslow puts it, "a Great Medium."²⁰

It may be pointed out in passing that the malevolent character given to the Creator, and the laws which we are told He created, finds very little countenance from the facts of Nature itself as understood by scientific men. The truth is that, outside man, disease is practically unknown as a constant and normal phenomenon, and that, where it does exist among animals and plants, it has been brought about by the agency of man²¹—a testimony to the folly and ignorance of man himself, and not to the fiendish cruelty of Nature's laws.

Ghost-Land Epitomised. It contains in Spirit Form Everything, Animate and Inanimate, that has existed.—Ghost-land not only contains the spirit forms of everything that has existed since man lived on earth—good and wicked, mineral, vegetal, and animal—but everything that has

¹⁹ Elliott O'Donnell, "Byways of Ghost-Land," 1911, pp. 181-182.

²⁰ "Religion of the Spirit World," p. 223.

²¹ See Sir E. Ray Lankester, "The Kingdom of Man," 1907, pp. 32-33.

appeared on this globe for millions and millions of years has its shadow form in the world outside our own. Half-men and half-apes or half-crocodile exist, with all kinds of headless cats and dogs; forms, hideous and grotesque, of every conceivable shape and size are there. Grizzly bears and mammoths, pterodactyls and palæolithic savages, elves and sprites, little fellows that ride on brooms, as well as astral forms of roasted legs of mutton, each find their allotted sphere in that world to which we are bound.²²

Thus the conception of life to come, as revealed by our Spiritualists, is identical in kind, although not in degree, with that held so tenaciously by all the lower races. The fundamental difference lies in the fact that in civilised communities it is only a minority who retain a system of thought formerly held by all its members; whereas, among the lower races, every individual, from chief to child, shares its belief and carries that belief into daily practice. From this one fact alone it will be seen that there is *no new thing* in the "new revelation" and "new religion" which is presented to us as a "new science." On the contrary, it is the oldest and most deep-seated of all man's conceptions, and offers a superstitious, not a scientific, explanation

²² For the evidence see particularly: Ward, "A Subaltern in Spirit-Land"; O'Donnell, "Animal Ghosts," "Byways of Ghost-Land."

of life. Of the two, the explanation of the savage is more logical than that of his civilised brother. The unregenerate heathen willingly sacrifices the present for the future. He consistently declares that, if he loses a limb, or dies from decrepitude, he will share those misfortunes in the other world. Civilised Spiritualists tell us that if a leg be lacking here it matters not, it will make no difference, but be quite all right when we reach the other side. Even when the body itself is blown to smithereens, it comes together again soon after you are in spirit-land.²³ It is our "wretched atmosphere" that has a disastrous effect on ghosts who wish to communicate with friends on earth, causing them literally to "go to pieces" when they come in contact with it.²⁴ No such evil results upon the spirit bodies of savage men are known, for the very good reason that, if the body be totally destroyed down here, it is as impossible for it to come together again in spirit form as it is for their uncultivated minds to hold that belief logically. Savages, after all, are no fools.

Three Principal Means of Revelation—Direct Vision, Mediumship, Automatic Writing.—There are three principal methods by which the in-

²³ Lodge, "Raymond," p. 195.

²⁴ See the complaint of the late Dr. Hodgson (formerly Sec. American Society for Psychical Research, but now in the spirit world) to his friend Dr. Hyslop, "Contact with the Other World," p. 181.

nabitants of the other world are able to transmit information to friends in the flesh.

By direct vision, certain persons being gifted with the power of " seeing " the varied glories and peoples of the celestial sphere, a power not vouchsafed to ordinary mortals.

By communications made through mediums, male or female, who may be divided into four classes, persons who may possess either a normal or an abnormal psychology : (1) Those who genuinely believe that revelations are made to them by the " spirits," and who are not deliberate frauds; (2) conjurers, who conduct the " manifestations " by means of tricks, in the majority of cases only known to themselves; (3) deliberate frauds, who wilfully trade on the ignorance of the credulous; (4) persons who are more or less on the verge of insanity.

By automatic writing, messages being sent by spirits or ghosts, and written down by a person who is not conscious of the words he puts on paper.

It is a remarkable fact that, while we are positively assured of the existence of a spirit world, so few mortals should have the power of actually seeing for themselves the glories of another life, though that very power is possessed by many of the lower animals. Atmospheric as well as mental conditions apparently govern the appearance of ghostly phenomena. The visitants from beyond

usually present themselves to the seer when the moon is at the full, and it is highly probable that our satellite affects the mental condition, inducing the belief that the objects seen exist outside the consciousness of the mystic. There can be no question that lunar influence on the body and mind of man is at times a very powerful one, and that it is capable of creating a state in which simple hallucinations are mistaken for objective realities. But, as Mr. Stuart Cumberland pointed out, if the hand be held before the eyes, ghosts still manifest their presence—a fact which, in itself, is sufficient to prove conclusively that the beings seen are mere creations of the imagination. We are told again and again that, when the visions are present, the “seer” is in a peculiar state mentally, a condition induced by bodily fatigue or by illness. Mr. Cumberland, who has done more than any man to expose the trickery which almost invariably surrounds spiritual manifestations, says that on one occasion, while suffering severely from malarial fever, he watched his own head leave his body and go bumping around the room, the knocks felt by this astral head being also felt by his material head on the pillow. During the Great War soldiers declared that it was when they were dog-tired that visions appeared to them. This confirms the evidence psychologists have accumulated during recent years, and proves conclusively that the in-

habitants of that other world are nothing but the creations of those who see them. To declare, as modern Spiritualists do, that their own evidence is cumulative, and therefore proves the truth of their new religion, is to ignore all that the past has taught the present—that many popular beliefs which rest on the universal testimony of mankind have no real foundation in fact.

If we turn to the evidence obtained through mediums, we are confronted by the serious admission made by the majority of Spiritualists—that the great majority of mediums are frauds. Even in those instances where fraudulent practice was not discovered at the time, subsequent inquiries established the fact—as in the case of Madame Blavatsky and Florrie Corner—that their wonderful manifestations savoured more of the trickster than they did of the saint. Blavatsky, the Russian adventuress, herself confessed to Moncure D. Conway that her miracles “were all glamour,” the on-lookers thinking they see what they really do *not* see. Yet it is on the face value of such creatures as these, who, in the one instance, successfully deceived a great chemist, Sir William Crookes, and, in the other, hoodwinked a whole world by her impostures, that it is proposed to erect that new faith which is to redeem all mankind. Mr. Stuart Cumberland declares that, as the result of his investigations into the ways of modern mediums,

there is no "manifestation" but what can be explained by "natural" causes. That gentleman, on one occasion, exposed the machinations of one "spirit" by spreading tin-tacks on the floor, an ambuscade which naturally excited the wrath of the medium caught *flagrante delicto*. In another instance the spirit was sprayed red with cochineal, only to reveal its stains on the person of the "disinterested" medium as soon as the lights went up.

In other cases, those in which deliberate fraud can be excluded, the actors are victims of their own delusions. A few years ago, Dr. Gilbert Ballet and Monier Vinard presented to the Société Médico-Psychologique de Paris the case of a man who was a professional spiritualistic medium. The patient was said to present all the characteristics of his class: a morbid excess of sensibility, and a morbid faculty for the development of the senses, especially of those of sight and hearing. His mental status recalled that of Swedenborg; he seemed to visit the planet Saturn, the manners and customs of whose inhabitants he described. His own body was a spirit, capable of quitting his bed, and passing like smoke into the planet. This patient was feeble-minded and suffered from ideas of persecution.²⁵

Automatic writing has become the most fashionable method of receiving messages from spirit-land;

²⁵ *Archives de Neurologie*, quoted in the *Hospital*, vol. xxxv.,
116.

it certainly is one of the most grotesque. If an hysterical patient be engaged in conversation, and, while his attention is thus diverted, a pencil inserted between the fingers of his right hand, and a third party whispers a question into the patient's ear, he can be induced to answer that question, although he actually discusses some totally different subject. The patient is, in fact, entirely unconscious of what his hand is doing, and is often quite ignorant of the events which the writing describes.²⁶

These three methods of communication with the spirit-world are, in some form or other, practised by all races, in all stages of civilisation. It was left to the Spiritualists of our time to reveal the marvels of the world of ghosts, and to describe the future that awaits us all as it has never been described before. As we have found, we are brought in contact with a state of existence the logical meaning of which is this: If it be true, as Spiritualists contend, that men and animals possess an entity which is capable of separating itself from the body of flesh whilst alive, and is capable of traversing space at certain times, an entity which, after bodily death, passes into a plane or sphere shared by like entities, and from which it is capable of communicating with the friends it has left on the earth plane, it follows that this quality must be possessed by all

²⁶ Dr. Bernard Hart, "The Psychology of Insanity," Cambridge, 1912, p. 43.

forms of life in the present, and that it was shared by everything that had life in the past. There is no possible escape from the logic of this position. In the next world, therefore, we shall meet the spirit-form of the Eozoon and the Trilobite, the Megalosaurus and the Mammoth, our newly-discovered Piltdown friend, Eoanthropus, with all the anthropoid apes. Spirits surround us mortals everywhere, and exist in every possible shape and form. We pass through their forms with every movement of our bodies, and, from the evidence, swallow them all day long. But not only does animate creation possess a spiritual side; that also is shared by everything else that has ever existed. Sticks and stones, fire and water, pots and pans, all have spirits. The likeness between the creed of the most cultured Spiritualist of to-day and that of the most savage of our species is absolutely identical. The fundamental basis lies in that universal belief of the most primitive races, that *everything* is animated by some mysterious force, which, when separated from its material form, is capable of existing in the same shape as its material counterpart.

In a work the object of which is to establish the identity that exists between the spiritualistic phenomena of the lowest savages and those of the highest races, it is unnecessary to attempt to prove that, in the majority of instances, the manifestations of Spiritualism have had their origin in

trickery and in fraud. One need only peruse the earlier works on Spiritualism, such as those of Florence Marryat, which give such wonderful accounts of the "miracles" performed by media like Eglinton and Florence Cook—miracles attested and sworn to by many witnesses—and compare those testimonies with the subsequent history of those notorious adventurers, to establish the fact that their work was the work of the magician, and not that of the saint. Mr. Volckman, who was a friend of Miss Marryat, and an unbelieving friend forsooth, detected Cook in her fraudulent machinations; yet, as Mr. Edward Clodd has pointed out, five months after that very detection we find Sir William Crookes testifying as to her genuineness! Eglinton was fond of materialising the spirit of one "Abdullah," who, as Florence Marryat told us, possessed "all the characteristics of the Eastern nation." The career of this Oriental spirit was brought to an end by the detection of Eglinton, in whose possession was found some muslin and a false beard which had been used to "materialise" his Eastern friend.²⁷

Spiritualists have again and again insisted upon the necessity of possessing *faith*, in order to reap the

²⁷ For an account of these exposures see Mr. E. Clodd's important work, "The Question?" 1917. Miss Marryat's book, "There is no Death," contains a full account of the "miracles" of Cook and Eglinton as seen by an eyewitness.

full moral benefit which follows a belief in their marvellous creed. There can be no question as to the sincerity of many of those who, in this twentieth century, profess and call themselves " Spiritualists," but whose thoughts of a spiritual world are the thoughts of the primigenial savage. What the sceptic does question is the value that is to be placed upon their evidence, and the scientific accuracy of the scenes so often described. Their own faith is unbounded, but the " will to believe " necessarily excludes the very qualities that make for truth. Spiritualists tell us that the entrance of *one* unbeliever to their sacred séance prevents the spirits doing what they would if only the faithful were present ; and, according to the same testimony, the faithful themselves are worked up to an excited state of expectation as to what may happen, and consequently are not in the mental condition to describe accurately what they actually do see. The late Professor Hugo Munsterberg conducted experiments in his psychological laboratories in the United States, which proved how valueless the evidence of eyewitnesses could be. One of his witnesses declared that the sound produced by a tuning-fork resembled the growl of a lion ! Another witness said it sounded like a fog-horn ! Professor Oliver Lodge himself at one time pinned his faith on the performances he witnessed of that celebrated adventuress, Eusapia Palladino, yet this creature

was detected in the practice of shameless frauds, about which, as Munsterberg declared, there could be no possible doubt. Nevertheless, we must repeat, it is on evidence such as this that we have been invited to share beliefs that are to establish a new religion and a new science.

No man who has given serious attention to the religious ceremonies of "heathen" races, which we collectively call superstition, can rise from that study without being profoundly impressed by the remarkable influence those beliefs and practices have upon the lives of those who believe in them. But are we to accept the animistic interpretation of Nature which is given us by primitive and savage man, and reject the explanation of natural phenomena put forward by the man of science? So far as science itself is concerned, it may be said that the majority of popular conceptions are erroneous conceptions, and stand in the same relation as the explanation of the quack does to that of the specialist. The savage holds that heaven is an immense solid vault resting upon the earth. If Spiritualists are to be consistent in their creed, they must reject the astronomical interpretation of the universe, and accept that of the savage. This analogy applies to every branch of scientific knowledge.

It says very little for human nature that, in this twentieth century of ours, there are to be

found men and women whose conceptions of life are those held by its lowest representatives. It seems as if it is impossible for a large number in civilised lands to advance *mentally* beyond a certain stage. The tendency in modern democracies is *downwards*. Whether it be politics or ethics, "science" or art, many ideas that belong to lower stages of culture are the ideas that seem destined to prevail—ideas which have had their value and use in the past, but which, in our modern state, are but incongruous survivals from a savage condition. Man, it seems, must of necessity have some form of superstition to hug. So he paints his old idols with his new aniline dyes, and assures a credulous world that he has discovered a new balm for all its ills.

But it will be obvious to all unbiased minds that not one satisfactory piece of evidence has been adduced by the advocates of this new religion which could not be matched by evidence of like nature from the statements of the lowest races, many of them cannibals. If we are to credit the truth of the one, no reasonable grounds exist why we should reject that of the other. Yet vast sums of money are expended annually by various sects in Christian countries in order to uproot in savage lands those very beliefs others herald as a new religion.

What Spiritualism is.—Spiritualism, as advocated to-day, is therefore nothing but a survival from

the most primitive ages of man's history, and only obtains a place in our mental life because it has received the sanction and benediction of men whose mental culture in this respect has not kept pace with the development of special branches of knowledge outside their own sphere. It is nothing but the fag-end of an old superstition—a superstition which obsesses the mind of barbaric man, because he does not possess the necessary knowledge which explains natural phenomena, a knowledge which only modern science is in a position to furnish.

Intellectual Decadence.—We think we live in a wonderful age. We boast that history knows no civilisation as great as ours. Yet, looking around, one is filled with misgivings. It seems as if, keeping pace with man's physical degeneration, there is a corresponding moral and intellectual degeneracy which forebodes no good for the future. Many who live in and share the culture of the twentieth century think as man thought when he associated with the cave-lion and the cave-bear.

Thus we find that the reversions to the past, which the ignorant proclaim as new gospels, are nevertheless dangerous maladies needing the scalpel of the specialist before they poison the mob. Modern Spiritualism is a reversion of a dangerous nature, and, consequently, deserves no more place in modern thought than does any other crudity promulgated by well-meaning but ignorant men.

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